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Lectures on Vedanta and Unitary Consciousness

Mahamandaleshwar
SWAMI MAHESHANAND GIRI

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Lectures on Vedanta and Unitary Consciousness

His Holiness Swami Maheshanand Giri
Mahamandaleshwar
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ॐ

दुर्जनः सज्जनो भूयात् ,
सज्जनश्शान्तिमाप्नुयात्।
शान्तो मुच्येत बन्धेभ्यो,
मुक्तश्चान्यान् विमोचयेत्।।

May the wicked become gentle,
May the gentle attain peace.
May the peaceful get rid of the bondages,
May the liberated liberate others.

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PREFACE

The 'word' is a special faculty endowed only to human beings amongst the living beings. It makes the communication of subtle experience possible. Hence Śiva revealed the secret of His being along with the means to experience Him through the word. This is called *Śruti* for it was heard by the ṛṣis and comes down to us in the form He Himself gave. The ṛṣis gave out in their own words what they understood by the sacred revelation through the practice of meditation and other spiritual disciplines. These are called *Smṛtis*. Both of them are verbal testimonials common to all humankind. The experience of one's preceptor as conveyed by verbal testimony is the special revelation to the aspirant. These three form the only source of supersensuous knowledge. It necessarily precedes the direct realisation or *aparokshānubhūti* All other means of knowledge can only communicate the facts of sensible universe. Hence the great Master Śaṅkarā in his magnum opus declares

'शब्दमूल एव अतीन्द्रियार्थ याथात्म्याधिगमः'

(*Brahmā Sutrā* 2.1) the only source of knowledge of the truth regarding the supersensuous is the verbal testimony.

Sense perception and reasoning based on it can never reveal the truth about God, soul, their relation, soul's journey after death, heaven, hell, the origin of the universe, merit and demerit acquired from virtue and vice, man's highest destiny, its fulfillment and related methods to attain it. Without knowing these and related topics one cannot live as a human being, though one may survive as an animal who does not possess the means to unveil the secret of the

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perceptual phenomenon, viz., the world as revealed through the senses. The explanation of the seen is in the unseen. Perception does not exhaust reality, nor does it provide a solution to our enquiring intellect. Every experience reveals the existence of an object which is sensible, but along with it is also revealed the subject. One is as much aware of the experiencing self as one is of the experienced object. There may be experiences where the existence of an object can be doubted, but there cannot be a single experience where one can doubt the presence of the experiencer. And yet the senses cannot reveal any knowledge about the perceiver, nor can the other means of knowledge based on sensuous perception. And yet how surprising that even the so-called intellectuals try to unveil its secrets, specially when one realises that objects are constantly changing and it is the subject who eventually stays constantly with us. Similarly to an enquiring mind the finite points out the infinite, change reveals the changeless, the imperfect betokens the perfect. Reality is ten times more than the three dimensional perceptual universe. Reason founded on sensuous experience always fails to unveil what is veiled by the senses. Reason moves within a small area of sensuous experience. It is beyond this area of reason where lies all that the humanity holds dear. Without knowing the truth of these values, human life becomes purposeless. A secular state controlling education leads the population towards agnosticism or atheism where ethics, moral attitudes and all that is great and good is lost. We see in India the degeneration of values in a short span of forty years, and it is only a blind intellectual who will fail to perceive it. The stark selfishness and related corruption is the inheritance bestowed upon the nation by our rulers from Nehru down to this date.

Generally, an enquiring mind gets bogged down by the divergences, even stark contradiction. But Bossuet instructs us not to be dismayed by these, but accept them as trustworthy as the golden chains that meet mortal sight at the throne of God. Revealed thought is perfected by intuition which catches the vision of the Real. It is only then that opposites do not clash any more and the opposites of soul and God are also merged into one Śiva. The superconscious state is 'filled with truth'. Śaṅkarā declares:

एनमात्मानन्निरस्तसमस्त प्रपञ्चव्यक्तं संराधनकाले पश्यन्ति'

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(*Brahmā Sutrā*, 3.2.6).

In the superconscious state one directly and vividly realises the Unmanifest bereft of all the manifestations. Man is endowed with the faculty of mystic intuition by which he transcends and solves the riddles of reason. Of course one has to discipline by

भक्ति ध्यान प्रणिधानाद्यनुष्ठानम्

(*Sutrābhasya* 3.2.6) unswerving love, one-pointed concentration and complete surrender. Vyasa also mentions in the *Mahābhārata*

यं विनिद्रा नितश्रवासाः सन्तुष्टाः संयतेन्द्रियाः ज्योतिः पश्यन्ति युञ्जनास्तस्मै योगा त्मने नमः योगिनस्तम्प्रपश्यन्ति भगवन्तं सनातनम्

The highest aspirants see the August Eternal One having scaled through the conquest of ignorance, vital limitations, mental attachments and sensuous apparatus. But all this can result only after the verbal knowledge of the Supreme Reality.

Vedā refers to the facts of common experience to communicate supersensuous knowledge. This common knowledge is not intended to be imparted. It does not mean to pass a verdict on them either. This is the only method available to verbal knowledge, viz., pointing the unknown through the known. Thus, the importance of verbal testimony in the field of spiritual vision is extremely vital. Hence the *Kaivalyopaniṣad* is taken up in this lecture series, specially because it is small but aphoristic and gives both the philosophy and practice of spiritual life leading to the superconscious state in detail.

Bharatiya Sanskriti Samaj and its President Mrs. Dayawati Gupta and Joint Secretary Mrs. Krishna Baijal have been working with dedication to bring the Vedanta at the footsteps of Delhite English speaking population. May Śiva bestow all success to their Project.

1-8-89 Swami Maheshanand Gi

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LECTURE ONE

We are in Delhi. Delhi is a place where all the various regions of India and, to some extent, the different parts of the world are represented. All the variety seen in the world can be found here, whether it is in terms of languages, cultures, different attitudes to life or religions. The topic that we are going to discuss is just the opposite of all the variety that we see around. It is the unitary consciousness. Earlier we had discussed integration and we had tried to find out and explain that integration is not something to be achieved. It is always present, it is self-evident and existing. We have only to discover it. If integration was something which we had to attain, then one day it would be lost, because whatever is attained is lost—*samyoga viprayogantah.* Hindu scriptures enunciate again and again that whatever is attained is always lost, whatever is natural has only to be discovered. Hence, integration is not to be attained. It is not the result of an action. So from integration we will move towards unitary consciousness.

This unit, the *Kaivalya,* is not to be attained or discovered. In all the variety that we see, the unity of consciousness always remains. Supposing there are 500 people sitting here. Do we not see ourselves as a complete unit in spite of the fact that we are part of a crowd? Similarly, we may be part of society, part of humanity, but that humanity is completely and totally present in each of us. Maharishi Gautama has tried to explain this in a particular way. Each horse or cow is a complete horse or cow. It is not that each horse is not complete in itself. That completeness is what he calls *asvata*, i.e., the horseness. Each horse or cow is a complete horse, a complete cow. Though all the horses are not ex-

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hausted in that one horse, yet it is complete. If we know the horseness in one horse, we are able to identify every horse from the time that horse came into being up to the time that horse will cease to exist. Similarly, if we have discovered the unitary consciousness within our own self, we have discovered the unitary consciousness which is present in all conscious beings. We have contacted the consciousness as it is. From the variety—the multiplicity of Delhi—we will attempt to discover, at least intellectually, this unitary consciousness. It is like a voyage where we sail from one end of the ocean to the other end. Similarly, we will cross this multiplicity and enter the unity.

The *Kaivalya Upaniṣad* will be like a boat in this case. When we sail from one shore to the other shore we need a boat. The *Upaniṣad* is like a boat because it takes us across. Actually all the *Vedās* can be compared to a boat. The word 'Veda' means knowledge. Knowledge takes us across from one side, i.e., bondage, to the other side which is liberation. *Vedās* as we all know are divided into four parts. Of these the *Yajurveda* has two recensions, *Krsna Yajurveda* and *Sukla Yajurveda*. The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* belongs to the *Sukla Yajurveda* recension. The *Kaivalya Upaniṣad* belongs to the *Krsna Yajurveda* recension. *Krsna Yajurveda* is more popular in South India whereas *Sukla Yajurveda* is more popular in North India.

The *Kaivalya Upaniṣad* starts with an interesting story. 'Atha' means that something has already happened before that. Hence, it starts with the assertion 'afterwards'. But after what? The *Upaniṣad* answers the question by naming the *ṛṣi* who seeks knowledge—*Atha-Aśvalāyana*. Āśvalāyana approaches the supreme teacher Brahmā and puts a question to him. Āśvalāyana was a Rgvedic teacher and was well known for his Sūtras. Even today there are a number of brahmins who always refer to Āśvalāyana as their Sūtra. Every Vedic scholar follows a particular pattern of life which is elaborated in the Grhya Sūtras, a particular pattern of sacrifices, that is, worship which is elaborated in the Sraūta Sūtras. Āśvalāyana was one of the teachers of these Sūtras.

Why is he called Āśvalāyana? A person born in the lineage of Aśvala is called Āśvalāyana. According to the Sanskrit derivative, *Aśvala Asvamlati iti Aśvala* means one who receives

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a horse. In some sacrifices, a horse is offered as a gift to the head priest. We know from other references in Vedic literature that Aśvala was actually the priest of Janaka. He is referred to in the *Atharvavedic Upaniṣad* or *Prasnopaniṣad* as Kasyapa Āśvalāyana which is his father's name. Here he is referred to as Āśvalāyana, one belonging to the lineage of Aśvala. Thus he is associated both with the ritualistic portion of the *Vedas*, that is, *Karmakanda* and the knowledge aspect, that is, *Jñanakanda*. Similarly, he is associated both with *Yajurveda* and with *Atharveda.*

Asva or horse refers to the senses. The *Upanisads* give an allegory in which the body is compared to a chariot and the senses to a horse. One who has consciously completely controlled the senses is called Aśvala. Only a person who is born in the lineage of Aśvala, that is, one who has controlled consciously all the senses is fit to attain *brahma vidyā,* the supreme knowledge of Brahman. By referring to *Atha Āśvalāyana,* the *Upaniṣad* lays down that only after a person has practised controlling his senses is he entitled to enquire about supreme knowledge. Supreme knowledge can be acquired only after the person has mastered this state of control.

This knowledge is not merely an intellectual effort. It is something which controls our whole being, it changes our total personality, our whole outlook. As mentioned earlier, it is not merely an intellectual conviction, it is a realisation. This is what distinguishes the *Kaivalya Upaniṣad* from many other schools of thought. There have been monists, absolutists and idealists who have remained so only on the intellectual level. They have not tried to change the whole outlook of man based on this conception. The *Kaivalya Upaniṣad* on the other hand is not merely an intellectual curiosity. It is not only a means to attain peripheral knowledge of that unity, but it is something which will bring about a total change in our personality.

This total change, this realisation is possible only if a person has the competency to attain it; what in Sanskrit is known as *adhikara.* According to the tradition, before engaging in a thorough study of any work, one must find out four basic things. The ancient way of viewing works or books was to find out the secret contained in that book. The modern

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attitude is entirely different. Today we have publishers and printers. Any book can be published. All we need to be competent to acquire that book is the money which has been mentioned as the price of the book. If we have money, we can buy any book. And that is why people buy all sorts of books and end up in confusion. Today this confusion is further compounded by audio-visual communication. Because as long as there were only books one studied them quietly and made an effort to understand them. But once concepts are presented audio-visually one becomes a recipient, one does not react and does not have time to read. One does not try to comprehend because the information is a continuous flow. Let us consider an example. Supposing you are driving your car, it is not easy for you to observe every passing car or even reflect over it. Because if you do that, you are bound to meet with an accident. The flow of traffic is continuous and you cannot reflect. It flows at its own speed. One can neither refer back nor can one reflect. As a result, one is thoroughly confused by the end. That is why it is emphasised that before entering into the study of a particular work we must find out whether we are competent to understand that work.

Next, we must know the *visaya,* that is, the subject matter of the book. Most of the time we buy books without knowing anything about the subject matter. Many years ago I saw a cartoon. Most people as we know do not buy books on philosophy. The cartoon depicted a book-shop with some of the best philosophical books. But the jackets of these books carried pictures of women so that people would be tempted to buy them. When they would realise what the book was all about it would be very late as they would have already bought the book. Many of us see the size of the book before buying it. I have often heard people say that they bought a good book for Rs. 15 only. They are not interested in reading the book but only in the paper. Because they do not try to find out what is the subject matter of the book, whether it will benefit them or prove harmful. We must know the subject matter—*adhikaria visayah.*[1]

The next point we must consider is *samabanda*: How is it relevant to the subject, how is the text relevant to the aspirant? The subject may be there, but it may not have relevance. A particular text may have been relevant to the

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conditions that existed 5,000 years ago. And if we want to implement it in our life here and now, it will not be relevant unless we have the capacity to delineate the fundamental principles laid down in that book. Most of the time when people read the *Purānās* or the great epics, they end up in confusion because they think that the incidents described in these works are being enacted in the 1980s. They do not try to see these incidents in their proper perspective—both spatially and temporally. They do not try to find out what was the condition of society 5,000 or even 10,000 years ago. How far had science developed at that time. How far had logical thinking developed. The world is not static; it is continuously moving. If we want to find out the relevance of those works to the world as it exists today, we have to go back 5,000 or even 10,000 years and find out the fundamental attitude enunciated in these works. Those fundamental values will remain constant and may guide us today but not the particular actions which were performed so many thousand years ago. Thus it will be ridiculous to conclude after studying the *Mahābhārata* that if the Pandavas were victorious in war by using chariots, archery, elephants, swords and clubs, we can also do the same and introduce chariots and elephants in our army. Just as in the case of warfare certain fundamental things are enunciated in these works which are true even today, but not the particular acts or instruments used. What they actually did in those days is not relevant today. But the attitudes, the basis, the viewpoint, the values which they held will be relevant even today. This relevance has to be determined before we take up a serious study of any work.

We must know the purpose, the aim of the work—*Sambandhasca prayojanam*. Once we know all these aspects only then can we understand the spirit of the work. So *atha* not only means after competency, but also means 'after' knowing the subject, purpose and relation. If we have examined all these aspects properly then the study is bound to produce results in the form of knowledge. In this particular case the form of knowledge is the Supreme Being.

The *Upanisad* mentions *upasametya* which is a technical word. We must approach the study in the proper way. There is some propriety in any study. Supposing you go to your geometry class without a compass, you will not be able to

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study geometry properly because you need that instrument. Similarly, if you study physics or chemistry, you need proper instruments. If we wish to attain knowledge of the Supreme Being, we must have the proper attitude, i.e., we must be ready to receive what the *Upanisad* will lay down. What is required to attain that knowledge will be discussed later because Brahmā himself will specify it.

Āśvalāyana prays, 'Teach me, Oh Lord, the secret knowledge of Brahmā which is hidden in our own being, so that I may attain the unity with the Transcendental Lord and be free of sins.'[2] *Adhihi bhagavan: adhihi* is an interesting word. It means 'repeat what you have already studied.' When we read a book we repeat what is already written there. Similarly, when the highest knowledge is imparted, even the words, the mode of expression has to be perfect. Perfection implies that it cannot be done alternatively. If there are two ways of doing a thing and both are equally perfect then we cannot say that any one of them is imperfect. Perfection implies completeness.

Often people want to know why it is necessary to study the *Vedās* in the very language of the *Vedās* and not through translations. The real reason is that particular idiom, that particular way of expression or word is expressed in a particular context. We cannot even change a single word. For example, the *Rgveda* starts with a prayer to Agni—*Agnimile purohitam,* i.e., 'I praise Agni'. It is not possible that the Vedic seers start the work by praising merely fire, because Agni means fire in ordinary language. By using the term Agni these seers are referring to God Himself. Why is God called Agni? *Agre nayati—ityagnih:* The literal meaning of Agni is that which takes us further ahead; that which leads us onwards. The Lord will lead us to higher values and eventually to His own knowledge. If we substitute the word Agni by *Vahni* which also means fire, it will not have the same semantic meaning. And the moment we translate it into fire, the word has absolutely no connotation. Unless we use the word Agni to understand the particular shade of meaning which the seers are trying to convey, we will never be able to understand the real purpose behind it. Translations do help to some extent, but unless they refer back to the original, we can never find out the context in which a particular word

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has been used. So the method of teaching the highest knowledge has been perfected by God Himself. And when we try to explain it, we follow the same pattern because that is a perfect pattern. Even if we were to change the order of words, we would lose the real implication behind it. Hence, not only ideas are eternal as far as the *Vedās* are concerned, but even the words and their order is eternal because it is perfect. Hence, we do not say, 'O Lord, teach us'. We say *Adhihi,* which means 'repeat it to me in the same way as you attained it', because that is the only way to learn the true purport. So Āśvalāyana, himself a *ṛṣi*, says: *Adhihi.*

The highest Lord is Brahmā because, according to the tradition, wherever there is *vamsa-brahmano,* that is, the order of teachers, the final is *svayambhu brahmane namah*. Brahmā is the first teacher from whom all the teachings have started. He is the Creator and after creation, it was His responsibility to impart knowledge which He did. Āśvalāyana, a Vedic seer, had already studied the *Vedās*. He says that this knowledge is *nigudham*.[3] It is hidden. It is a secret doctrine. The word used is *guha* which means a cave; that which is hidden in a cave. Actually the place where the soul feels all pleasure and pain is the centre of our being, that is the heart. A person always refers to himself in the centre of the heart. For instance, a person will place his hand on his chest and say 'I will do it.' He does not put his hand on his head while saying this. When he talks about thinking, he may refer to his head. But when he refers to himself, he will always refer to his heart. Whenever there is a sense of deep loss it is felt in the centre of the heart and not in the head. In all the different languages, emotion is always centred in the heart. The expression used is: 'I felt it in my heart.' So it is in that particular place where the 'I' is experienced that this knowledge is hidden. Unless we discover it there, we may intellectually perceive it, but it will not become part of our realisation, part of our life. In this body-mind-soul complex, what we call our individuality, our personality, is composed of the body, the mind and the soul. All these three together constitute our personality or individuality and not any one of them alone.

The Samaveda in the *Chandogyopanisad* has described it by using an allegory. Once a person owned a field. In olden days there were no banks, no lockers or safes. When some

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one had wealth to hide—gold or diamonds—they would hide it under ground. That man's father had hidden his wealth under ground in that field but before he could reveal it to his children, he died. His children worked hard in the field and supported themselves on whatever they earned from agriculture. After a few years, an old friend of their father's visited them. He noticed that their standard of living had gone down and enquired as to what the problem was. They told him that though their parents had a lot of money, they did not know where all the wealth had gone so they had to depend on agriculture for their livelihood. The old man asked them to show him all the old account books. Earlier, people used to write everything in their account books as compared to modern times when they cannot write anything in their account books. He examined the books and found an entry which said that their father had dug a hole at a particular place in the field. They went and dug at that place and discovered all the wealth which was hidden there.

The *Upanisad* says that every day the old man's children were walking over the wealth but did not know that the wealth was hidden there. They were not able to benefit from the hidden wealth. In the same way, the *Upaniṣad* says, we are walking, that is, utilising this 'I-consciousness' every day, but we do not know that Supreme bliss is hidden there, Siva Himself is hidden there. Being ignorant, we utilise this only for agriculture, that is, we do certain actions and reap their fruits. To use the Christian terminology, 'As you sow, so will you reap.' So we utilise this 'I-consciousness' only for sowing the actions and reaping their fruits, and are not able to utilise that eternal bliss which is hidden. One day a person who has realised this comes along and says let us study the *Vedās* again. Though every child in ancient India had studied the *Vedās,* yet he did not study them with their implied meaning because no one had guided him. So he says let us study the *Vedās,* that is, the account books all over again.

The *Upaniṣads* have described that it is within our own heart centre, in our own 'I-consciousness', that the secret is to be found. The moment we ask the question 'who am I', what is my true self, my true being, we start analysing and we discover the supreme knowledge which is *nigudha,* i.e., it is hidden but it will be revealed only when we become

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sat sadbhih sevyamanam nigudham. Unless we attain purity of heart, we cannot learn this secret no matter how much we search for it. It is only when we are given to the enquiry of truth not for the sake of any worldly gain but to attain the truth as it is, can we discover it. *Sadbhih sevyamanam* has the same implication as the word Āśvalāyana, that is, *adhikara,* the competency. *Nigudham* implies where to search for it.

We should be completely dedicated to it as expressed by the terms *varistham, brahmavidyam varistham.* It is the most chosen. It is something which we choose more than anything else. It is only when we want God above everything else that we can find Him. Most of the time we worship God not because He is God, but because of what we can get out of Him in this world. Thus he is not *Voristha*; he may be *Vora.* He is chosen as an instrument, as a means to attain something which is *Voristha.* We can easily see this in any temple. If we ask any devotee the reason for his being there, it will be for obtaining something—winning a court case, getting higher wages, increased production or even political victory. Rarely will we find a person who will say that he only wants God. That is why we never find God. Often we hear the complaint that though we have served God so much, our mind is still not quiet, we are still not able to dive deep within and experience that supreme joy which the scriptures talk about. That is because we have not made Him *Voristha.* Unless He is the highest that we want, He is the first priority in our life, we cannot attain that supreme joy.

yaya cirat sarvapopain vyapohya—That supreme knowledge removes *sarvapapam,* i.e., all the sins. What is *Sarvapapa? Sarvapapa* is ignorance, not realising that God is the only omnipotent force in the world. The ego has no standing to act upon anything. Lord Kṛṣṇa has made this very clear.[4] First, we identify ourself with the ego and thus become ignorant of the fact that actually the ego has no power to act. It is a moved mover and not an unmoved mover. It is controlled by so many factors. It moves, it acts, but that is because it is being acted upon either by our desires or by our previous actions. We feel that we are independent in acting but in reality we are completely controlled when we act. Being ignorant of this fact, we identify ourself with whatever is done by the body-mind complex and because we assert that this is our action, we are always directed towards it.

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This is *sarvapapa*. For example, if you know that winning a particular litigation depends not on your false evidences, as you cannot ordain things and win that particular litigation. There are innumerable factors which influence the outcome: the lawyer that you have selected, the judge who is deciding the case, the laws that are in force. If you realise this, you will not do any wrong to win that particular litigation. But now you feel that it is you who can win the litigation and that is why you commit all sorts of sinful acts. So, it is ignorance of this fact which leads you to sins. Once you get rid of this ignorance, once you know that the ego is not the final arbitrator, it is not the final doer, it is being directed by so many other forces, then you will act not merely for a particular benefit, but in a way you ought to act.

Virtue is not something which is taught. Every person is virtuous when he has no gains to attain. If a person speaks a lie there is always a reason behind it. But when he says the truth there is no reason behind it. If a person is violent, there is a reason behind it, but if he is sitting quietly, there is no reason behind it. If we were to ask a person to go out and kill people, his answer will be that he is not mad. Thus, a person who indulges in violence has a reason, a particular purpose he wants to achieve. That is human nature. Virtue is basically the nature of an individual. He commits sins only when he has to attain something. Once he realises that this attainment is not in his hands, there will no *raison d'etre* for him to act in a vicious way. So this ignorance will be dispelled—*Sarvapapam vyapohya*. And the result follows immediately—*yaya cirat sarvapapam vyapohya*. The dawning of knowledge and the destruction of ignorance are instantaneous. It is not that you acquire knowledge one day and your ignorance will be destroyed another day. It is not that you light a lamp today and the darkness will be shattered in due course. Often people say, 'We have known the truth. In due course we will get out of ignorance.' It is not in due course, it is immediate—*yaya cirat sarvapapam vyapohya paratparam purusam yati vidyan*. And the man attains the highest bliss.

An interesting word here is *vyapohya* (*vītapatuhya*). 'Uha' basically means conception and reasoning based on certain assumptions you have. Now whatever you have conceived

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out of ignorance, once the ignorance is dispelled, it is *apoha.* It is removed instantaneously, simultaneously. And it also suggests that wrong conceptions can be removed only by right conceptions. Wrong reasoning can be removed only by right reasoning. There is no other way of removing it. So by *vyapohya,* the *Upaniṣad* clearly lays down that it is only the psychosophic vision or *vidyā,* or to put it simply, the wisdom that can remove this fundamental bondage, this multiplicity which binds you to the world with all its snares of desire, lust, anger, covetousness. All these things bind you to multiplicity and stop you from taking a flight into this unitary consciousness.

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LECTURE TWO

We started on the voyage which takes us across from multiplicity to unity. Āśvalāyana enquires about that Supreme Unity which can be attained through realisation. The *Upaniṣad* goes on to say,[5] *Tasmai*—to the one who is fit to receive this knowledge. As was discussed earlier, Āśvalāyana, having controlled his senses, was a fit recipient to attain this knowledge. To such a person knowledge must be given. So, the *Upaniṣad* says *pitāmahaśca*. The fathers of all the creatures are Daksa, etc., the *Prajāpatis*. Since Brahmā created the *Prajāpatis*, he is called *pitāmaha*, i.e., grandfather.

Pitāmaha did not neglect or overlook the enquiry, the *Upaniṣad* is trying to emphasise that when an aspirant is competent, the teacher should neither say 'no' nor neglect his enquiry. This is one of the final duties of a person who has realised himself. Though he has no other duties, yet he should see to it that the boat which took him across is not destroyed, is not lost. The knowledge which he has himself received, has been passed down to him through tradition which is actually the boat. If it was not for this boat, he himself would not have attained this knowledge. Hence, it is his duty that a competent aspirant receives this knowledge, who in turn will pass it on to the next generation and thus the flow of tradition will continue. Loss of tradition can never be rejuvenated. Any particular knowledge once lost, can never be acquired in the same form in which it was present at any given time. For example, in the military sciences, different types of arms and ammunition were being used in India 5,000 years ago. We read in the *Mahābhārata* that certain incidents took place which were more or less similar to what is happening today. Though

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they are similar, they are not identical. The reason is that the method, the technology depended on something other than what we are depending on today. This is especially true in the spiritual field, because here we are not dealing with something which can be developed out of sense perception. We are dealing with something which is beyond our sense perception, therefore it becomes more difficult to discover, to rediscover, once the tradition is lost.

Pitāmaha did not neglect the enquiry and proceeded to tell Āśvalāyana about the supreme knowledge; but he did not tell him what *brahma vidyā* is, what the supreme knowledge is. This is something similar to what we read in the *Gītā*. The Lord begins by promising to reveal the final truth:[6] 'I am going to tell you what the final knowledge is.' And then he goes on to say:[7] 'The final truth can neither be said that it is, nor can it be asserted that it is not. It is beyond both being and non-being.' Ācārya Śaṅkarā points out that the Lord started with the great assumption that He was going to teach and then He added that it is beyond being and non-being. Ācārya Śaṅkarā says that this is not the way to teach. There is a reason behind this. The final truth can be pointed out by first describing the means of its realisation. It is of no use if we say something which the other person cannot grasp. We find that words cannot convey, unless that which is being conveyed has been experienced by the other person. For example, if we say that Devadatta is a cook. We learn something about Devadatta because we know people who are cooks, and we know what cooking entails. To put it differently: We know what a cow is. If we say that Gītā is a cow—cows also have names—then we know what we are talking about because we know what a cow is. Or, by describing the quality of an object, we can say something about that object. For example, if we say a green suit. Here, the greenness has been observed somewhere else. Or, we may know about an object by indicating some relation as, for example, Devadatta is the son of Yajñadatta.

In Sankrit, there are only four ways through which we can comprehend the meaning of any word: by *kriyā*, i.e., action, or by *jāti*, i.e., a particular category, or by quality, or by relationship. Apart from these four ways there is no other way of knowing the meaning of any particular new word. If we

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were to start talking about a thing which neither has action, nor quality, nor relationship, the other person would be at a loss to understand what we are trying to convey. But by describing the means, we are able to direct his attention towards that. Let us consider an example to understand this better. Immediately after the new moon, it is not easy to trace the moon in the sky. And if we want to show a person the moon, we will ask him to look between two branches of a tree. The moon is not between the two branches, but by seeing between the two branches, he will be able to see the moon. Similarly, we have to learn certain things by which we are able to comprehend the Supreme reality which is being discussed.

Pitāmaha says that *śraddhā, bhakti, dhyānayogādavehi* are the four means through which we can realise the Supreme reality. *Śraddhā* means faith in English. Though *śraddhā* has a particular connotation, which the word faith does not convey. *Śraddhā* means that which guides us to a particular action. Ācārya Śaṅkarā says,[8] *śraddhāvihīnasya*—a person who does not have faith will not be able to dedicate himself to the goal that he wants to achieve. Even in the absence of faith a person may work, but he cannot work wholeheartedly. Unless we work wholeheartedly to attain the final beatitude, we cannot attain it. Thus *śraddhā-vihīnasya tu na pravṛttiḥ*—a person lacking in faith will not be able to give his undiverted attention to the goal and therefore *pravṛttiśūnyasya na sādhyasiddhih*—he will not able to attain what he wants to attain.

This is one of the greatest barriers. Ācārya Śaṅkarā points out[9] that because we lack faith we are continuously moving in this world and are not able to transcend it, it seems as if lack of faith has completely obstructed our development, our movement towards the goal. Faith is the conviction that the tradition of scriptures and preceptors is contentful and reliable. Faith does not mean that we have to accept everything which has been said by everybody or mentioned in every work. We have to differentiate between blind faith, faith and faithlessness. These are three different mental attitudes. If a person says that because he says such and such a thing, we have to accept it and we do accept it, it is blind faith. Here no reason, no experience which we have is being referred to. Accepting whatever another per-

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son says may be gullibility; but it is not faith. Faith implies that we are able to verify whatever has been said. This point is important. Most prophets say that they have realised something and we have to accept it because they say so. *Sanātana Dharma* on the other hand is very particular about this: If we cannot experience a thing, if it is the experience of another individual then it cannot be accepted as truth by us. According to *Sanātana Dharma*, faith means that whatever the scriptures propound, preceptors throughout the ages have verified it. Everyone who has acquired knowledge through tradition has practised it, experienced it and verified that what the scriptures say is true. Not only that, it should not contradict reason. Reason cannot give us new knowledge; but reason is like the touchstone by which we are able to examine whether gold is pure or not. Similarly, by reasoning we are able to find out whether a particular knowledge is reliable or not.

There is an interesting story narrated by Yāska. When the great *ṛṣis* where leaving this world, common people told them that they had been seeking their advice and if they left who would guide them and how would they lead their lives. The *ṛṣis* reassured the people that they would send a *ṛṣi* who would always guide them. The *ṛṣis* went away and sent reason. Reason is something hidden within us, guiding us. Hence, it is like a *ṛṣi*. Whatever a person says or a book says should not contradict either reason or experience. A new experience does not necessarily imply contradiction of an earlier experience; but if it does contradict the experience which we already have, then it cannot be accepted. Thus, this verification, the confidence that we can attain it is important. We can have this vision and also know that it is not contrary to either reason or to our experience. When we view it in this light then only it becomes faith; otherwise it remains gullibility, it remains blind faith. Faithlessness implies that we try to find fault with a particular concept or a particular teaching. Here we do not make an attempt to understand what the other person is trying to say, but we merely try to find some flaw in it. If we begin with that conception, we can find fault with anything.

There was once a student—a *brahmacārin*. He was not aware of the ways of the world. He was staying with his

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preceptor. Once he had to go to Allahabad for the *Kumbhamelā*. He boarded a train which was overcrowded. He noticed that a lady had placed her trunks and things on the seat. Sometime passed and he approached her and requested her to share the seat. He had called her mother. To a Hindu, the greatest honour shown to a woman is to call her mother. But this lady only wanted to pick fault with this *brahmacārin*, she did not accept the sacred conception which is associated with motherhood. She told him that since she had not been friendly with his father, how could she be his mother. Being a student, he was not well versed in the ways of the world. So he got confused and apologised and called her sister. Hearing this, she told him that he was implying that her mother had been friendly with his father. The *brahmacārin* was thoroughly confused by now and he called her daughter. Whereupon the woman told him that he was insinuating that her mother had been friendly with him. The *brahmacārin* addressed her as the Divine Mother, Devi. Hearing this she told him that since she did eat goat how could he call her Divine Mother. By then the train had reached the next station. The *brahmacārin* was so confused that he got off there.

Words like mother, sister, daughter have very sacred associations, but even they can be *text-tortured.* These words can be distorted to convey something which the person who is using them could never have meant. Therefore, once faithlessness takes root in our mind, it becomes impossible to find out the real meaning or purpose of a text, or even the meaning of the words of a preceptor.

There is a prayer in the *Rg Veda:*[10] 'We want faith to be established in us during the morning prayers. We invite *śraddhā*, we invite faith. At noon we invite faith. When the sun sets we invite faith. Oh *śraddhā* remove all the faithlessness in us.' Even in our daily life we are able to do most of the things only by trusting someone. For example, we go to a barber. We trust that he will not behead us while he is shaving with a sharp razor. If we start doubting and cannot trust, then we cannot go to a barber. Or, a person may get married to a girl who is a complete stranger. At night he might be afraid that she might kill him, but he has trust. When modern scholars study the *Vedās* and other such scriptures, they try to point out the contradictions in them.

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They merely want to prove what is already in their mind. For example, they have accepted the dictum that ideas are continuously evolving. So, an earlier work cannot contain a higher idea, a higher concept. The moment they come across a higher concept, they try to break it down in such a way that it becomes a lower concept. If they find a developed language in the earlier tradition, they promptly conclude that this must be a later addition to the work, because this higher language could not have been evolved by the earlier authors. That is the reason why they study the *Vedās,* the holy scriptures, and instead of seeking spiritual enlightenment from them or acquiring certain value systems described in them, they are continuously striving to find just the opposite of it. Just as blind faith should be avoided, similarly faithlessness should also be avoided.

Another conception which *Sanātana Dharma* has always emphasised is that no man can be free of illusion, negligence and desire. It is in the very nature of every human being to have illusions about something or someone. Similarly no matter how careful we are, there will be times when we will neglect a particular aspect. And there is also wish-fulfillment. If we really want to see a thing, we will see it even if it is not present there. If we examine the development of sciences, the development of philosophies, we find that there are many instances where a man who has discovered great things, neglected certain aspects.

There is a story. Einstein and Max Planck were once discussing a particular topic. Though Einstein himself had discovered the theory of quantum, yet he was convinced that this uncertainty factor could not be in the nature of things. So he was continuously working to find out a way to eliminate this uncertainty factor in physics. Quantum is a factor which deals with uncertainty. Einstein told Max Planck that God does not play dice with us. If in the very nature of things uncertainty is present, it is like playing dice. Max Planck told Einstein to stop preaching to God what He ought to do and what He ought not to do. Both were scientists of the highest calibre, but they had a particular wish. Einstein did not want to see uncertainty, even though it is present. He wanted to eliminate it. Since every man has this

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fault in him, that is why when we accept the word of another person we must have this attitude that it can be developed further. It may be true that we are utilising the knowledge that he has given us; but we have the capacity to go ahead, to move further on. Knowledge cannot be like a blind alley; that once we have attained it, no further progress can be made. So, faith is not merely faith in what is being said, but faith in our own self. Unless we have that faith in our own self, we will only see a book as authoritative or an individual as authoritative and we will not be able to progress further towards the goal. Many of us fall into this.

Sampūrnānanda was a great man. He has recorded his childhood experiences. He was a student of Sanskrit. One day he saw his teacher going to the bathroom at dusk. Young that he was, he wanted to play a practical joke. He told one of his friends that one should not go to the bathroom at dusk. He records that his teacher heard this and did not go to the bathroom. The teacher did not even enquire whether this was mentioned in any of the scriptures. This is the case with many of us. We come across a writing, say, in a magazine. We do not even try to find out the source of that particular verse, whether it is authoritative, who said it and in what context it was said, what is the purpose of saying it. Without analysing any of these things, we read an article in a magazine and we are convinced that it must be true. Whenever we come across any passage, we must analyse. That is why when we read the *Upaniṣads* or the *Gītā* or the *Mahābhārata* or any of the ancient works, there are definite rules which have to follow. We must find out what the book starts with and what it ends with. Whenever a person wants to convey something, he will first make an assertion, then give evidence and eventually come to a conclusion.

There must be a relationship between what is asserted at the beginning and the conclusion at the end. That shows what the particular author or speaker is trying to convey. We also have to be conscious of the particular new message which that book is trying to convey. For example, if we read a book in physics, mathematics is taken for granted. It will build on that assumption. Similarly, when we try to preach a spiritual message, it has to be conveyed in a certain way, using certain methods, which the other person is aware of.

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We take those things for granted. It is not necessary that the particular method which we have chosen is true. As in the case of physics we take mathematics for granted, because the purpose is not to teach mathematics, but physics. Similarly, when we read the epics, we may come across many events which we may not understand. Nevertheless, we should try to find out what new message that particular incident or epic is trying to convey. Then we must examine whether any particular idea has been repeatedly emphasised in that book. The idea a person wants to convey, he will repeat it again and again. He may also say something by the way, but that is not what he is trying to convey. We must examine how he builds up his argument, what is the rationale that he gives for a particular idea. Unless we follow this method to study the particular work, we will never be able to find out the true message of that particular book.

It is true that often we not able to trace these steps ourselves and that is why we need a preceptor, a person who has mastered that particular work and hence he is able to guide us. But the important point is that he guides us through these steps. He tells us the steps. This is something like attending a class in mathematics. If the teacher just gives us the answer to the question then we cannot say that we are learning mathematics. Therefore, he teaches us the particular steps which lead us to the answer. It is only then that we can say that we have studied mathematics. Similarly, when a preceptor teaches a text, he will adopt these steps. He is able to guide us along those lines, but if he merely says that this is the essence of this book, then this knowledge will be of no use to us. It will never give us the certainty that is needed.

There are two types of certainty we live with—one is what Ācārya Śaṅkarā calls the *avicārita* and the other is *vicārita*. Supposing we see two trees at a great distance and they appear to be one, we are more or less certain about what we have seen. But if someone questions us whether we are sure, our reply will be that is what we feel, that is what we think. On the other hand if a pea has been placed on our palm, we look at the pea. Now, if someone questions us whether we are sure that it is a pea, we say with confidence that we are

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sure that it is a pea. So, when we see a thing from a distance, we are not confident about it. The same is true of spiritual experiences. As long as we have only a blurred vision of these experiences, we can never be sure about them. But once we have experienced them clearly and repeatedly, then only can we be absolutely confident. It is then that we can say that faith has become absolutely connected with our way of action, the way we will act from then onwards. It is this faith which is being described here in the *Upaniṣad*.[11]

Realise it through faith. Faith is one of the most important means, however, it has to be developed. Doubts have to be removed; but they have to be removed properly. For example, we see things all around. Though it is true that we see things, yet the preconceived notions which we have will more or less determine how we will see a particular thing. But there are philosophers who jump to a brilliant conclusion: Because we cannot perceive anything without being influenced by preconceived notions, there is nothing which is not a preconceived notion. Hence, the tendency is to believe that all sensuous knowledge is no knowledge, because in a particular case, sensuous knowledge has been controlled by our preconceived notions. Now this is self-contradictory, beoause if we say that a particular experience is an illusion then we have to assert what the true experience is. Supposing we have seen a snake in dim light, but when we shine a torch on it, we find that it is a rope. Once we have seen it as a rope, we are able to assert that the snake was unreal. So the unreality of the snake depends on the reality of the rope. If we say that all experience is an illusion, the question remains illusion with respect to what? Similarly it is true that when we observe an object, we only observe its quality. We are able to see its form, i.e., quality of the substance, we are able to see its colour, we are able to touch it and find out whether it is soft or hard. All these are sensations. Now, it may be asked here whether there is nothing else to observe apart from those sensations. We believe that nothing else is present. But this is a mistake we make. Unless there was an existence, a being, it would not have been possible for us to perceive those qualities because qualities have to rest in some matter which has an existence of its own. Hence, the concrete act of knowing itself means that there is a knower and there is something which is be-

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ing known. When we assert that there is no substance which is being known, we are putting ourself in a state of contradiction which will eventually lead to faithlessness. Similarly when we make a scientific or a philosophical interpretation of the cosmos, we find certain forms in it. We find a system in it. At present we are not able to discover that system because we are imposing a preconceived system on it. It is not that we have a preconceived and presupposed mould in which we are putting the cosmos, the world.

As mentioned earlier, we may make a mistake and we may read something which is not present; but the cosmos itself has an intelligible system, and therefore it is not only that we are imposing a system on it, but it has a system of its own. This system discloses itself to the reflective mind. Unless there is faith, no scientific or philosophical enquiry can be taken up, no metaphysics can be built up. The faith that something is present which we are trying to read, which we are trying to find out is important. Ācārya Śaṅkarā says that it is not that we are imposing a system on the cosmos, but the cosmos has its own system which we try to read by adopting an intellectual approach, an emotional approach. That is why the *Upaniṣads* deal with cosmological, metaphysical, psychological, ethical, aesthetical, epistemological, ontological, sociological, spiritual and religious axis. All these aspects are discussed in the *Upaniṣads* because life is a whole. Unless we are able to bring everything together in a unified interpretation, we cannot live purposefully. The universe is a system which we have to read and find out. There are two ways of doing this, a scientific way and a philosophical or metaphysical way. It is a sort of two way traffic. Either we look at the world and analyse it, analyse the finite things, which will eventually lead to the observation that there is a spiritual reality which gives substance to all this variety. This is the scientific approach. That is, we take the experience as it is, analyse it in such a way that it leads to a meaning or a purpose and thereby reach the conclusion that whatever the basis of the being is, it is infinite, it is of the very nature of existence because it is a being, it is conscious and blissful—*ananta—saccidānanda*. By perceiving the variety and working our way backwards, we reach the origin. The other approach is the spiritual one in which we first contact through deep medita-

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tion, *samādhi, ananta-saccidānanda.* Having contacted it, we are able to deduce how the variety has come into being. The interesting point is that both these approaches lead to the same result and these identical results give us complete faith in what we have attained. This faith is not in relation to something which is theoretical or academic. It is something we have to live with. It attaches a value to human life and its experience and is able to interpret all our experiences in a purposive way. This is the true purpose of philosophy.

Unfortunately, in Europe this trend got diverted when Christianity insisted that its message of salvation did not depend on reflection. The moment we build a wall that the final goal has been achieved and no further progress can be made, we stop looking at things reflectively. Hence, in Europe philosophy became academic. (For the present, we will not discuss Marx who was the only one who rebelled against this after several centuries.) Therefore analysis of things was confined to University teachers and students who were studying the subject. It lost all contact with life as such. On the other hand in India, we have always insisted that the aspirant has to be open-minded and that unremitting mental effort is necessary to attain the highest goal. The highest goal is not something which has been attained by a particular person at a particular time, but it is something which everyone has to discover for himself by exerting himself.

However, when the revelation loses the sense of mystery then it ceases to be the real spiritual search, the real spiritual hankering. It is then that religion begins to degenerate into either Sociology or Psychology or even Politics, because spiritual effort is lacking. Religion is no longer used to scale spiritual heights, to attain the beatific vision because that beatific vision has already been attained. So religion disintegrates. It no longer guides us towards a higher goal—the spiritual goal. Religion then becomes a University or an academic subject, something we learn by rote, certain creeds and credos we believe in or we are supposed to believe in, and there the matter ends. It is no longer a search.

Revelation means to reveal and not to veil. Yet most of the time revelation is used to veil the search, to veil the reality. This is because we do not want to face the reality and because we feel that some observations will contradict cer-

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tain religious principles which we believe are final. Revelation means revealing, that is, removing the veil. The illusion is to be removed through this continuous mental effort. Thus faith is not believing in certain things but, as pointed out by Pitāmaha, *Avehi*—it has to be realised because it is *nigūḍhā*. It was earlier said that *Brahma Vidyā* is *nigūḍhā*, that is, it is hidden and we have to reveal it, realise it and experience it. Thus, faith is a guide to experience and does not mean merely believing a thing.[12]

We will discuss *bhakti* or devotion later. We will see how that is necessary for attaining the final spiritual beatitude.

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LECTURE THREE

We were discussing how Āśvalāyana goes to *parameṣṭhi-pitāmaha* and asks him to lead him to the knowledge of the Supreme. Pitāmaha reveals to him the path that will lead him to the final goal. The first point we discussed was faith: *Śraddhā-bhakti-dhyānayogā-davehi,* i.e., know the Supreme Being through faith, *śraddhā*. The next point to be discussed is *bhakti.* This is often translated in English as devotion. Though we may use the term, but we should be clear that there is a definite difference between devotion and *bhakti*. The word devotion comes from the term 'to devote' which, in its Latin root, means to dedicate oneself by vows. We take a vow and we dedicate ourself to that particular thing, to that particular person, to that particular ideal, to that particular goal. In short, the sense of duty is important here—we have taken a vow and we stick to it. The idea of devotion implies a sense of duty. The two great Ācāryas of *bhakti*—Narāda and Śāṇḍilya—have written *bhakti sūtras*. While defining *bhakti,* both have used the word love. According to Nārada[13] and Śāṇḍilya,[14] *bhakti* is supreme love towards the Supreme Being, i.e., God. Here the idea is not that of duty, but of love. The word love itself is derived from an Indo-European root which in Sanskrit is read as *lubh* 'to attract'. In Hindi too, we sometimes use the term *lubhānā*—*Usne mera man ko lubhāyā*: 'He attracted me towards himself.' So the word love implies that a thing in itself has a basic quality to attract. The feeling which arises out of this attraction is called love and, therefore, the real meaning of *bhakti* refers to love and not to duty.

Historically, we can see a fundamental difference between the approach of the Semetic religions and that of Hinduism.

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As most of you know God created angles. One of them was Lucifer. Later, God created man and He asked all angels to bow down before man. However, Lucifer refused. He said that he was not going to bow down to anything which was created. He would bow down only before God. When he refused to obey God, he was called Satan.This illustration shows that Lucifer did not lack in love, but he lacked in duty. He did not obey God. As far as the Semetic religions are concerned love is not enough, they attach importance to obedience. Hinduism, on the other hand, emphasises love. There is no doubt that we also attach great importance to obedience, but that is as long as we are following the path of action, *karma*. But when we transcend it, we enter *bhakti*, and that is when we have love for God. We absorb the sense of duty to such an extent that we will automatically do our duty. The emphasis here is not on duty but on love. Now what does love imply? Yagñavalkya says in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* that the main centre of love is always our own self.[15] We love every thing which is related to us. If a thing is not related to us, we cannot love it. To put it in a very gross way, your wife is very nice, but your love is such that she is nice to you. However, if she ceases to be nice to you, and if she entertains other men, do you still feel that she is loving you? No matter how much you love her, love will be always related to your own self. When a person says 'I love without any desire', what is known as *ahaitukī bhakti*, even then the question arises: do you enjoy loving that person? The answer will be 'yes'. If it is painful to love him or her, you will not love him or her. You may be dutiful to him or her, whatever the case may be. But it is an entirely different thing to be dutiful and to be loving. Yajñavalkya asserts that love in essence is always connected with our own self.

We may ask ourselves how can we supremely love any thing, because when we love something, we are loving its contact with us, its connection with us. In short, we are loving ourself more than that particular subject or object. How can we say that love for God has to be supreme? The *Upaniṣad* says that we have to first analyse what our own real self is.[16] The *Upaniṣad* goes on to say that in the beginning there was only one Supreme Being. Before creation, He alone was present. Out of Himself, He has created all be-

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ings including me, that is, the soul. In other words, we can say that in the beginning I was one with God, because before creation He alone existed. Therefore, I was part and parcel of Him, I was one with Him. Now I have become divided, I have become separated, I have lost that unitive experience. All my actions are eventually to gain this unity. I am pining for this unity and because this unity is real, after the creation ceases, it will continue to be real. Even during this period, it is not unreal. Hence, I am actually loving my real nature, my true nature, which is God. Since it is my real nature, my true nature, I can love it supremely because it is not something different. But one must develop faith in this unity. That is why we discussed *śraddhā*, an intellectual conviction, an emotional feeling and certitude that this is the truth. As long as I believe that God is entirely different from me, that supreme love will not spring forth, *bhakti* will not be aroused. Hence, love is actually identical with Śiva.

There is a book *Tirumandiram* in which the author Tirumūlara says that the ignorant person believes that love and Śiva are two different entities. He does not know that love is Śiva. Once he realises this, he remains possessed of love, which is Śiva. That is why in many of our scriptures we come across the statement that we do not want any thing from *bhakti; bhakti* itself is our goal because this love is of the very nature of Śiva. Just as I love myself and because He is myself, therefore, He is of the nature of love. We may call Him *prema vigraha*. He may take any form. This can be illustrated with the example of light.

Light takes the form of the object on which it falls. If it falls on a flower, it takes the form of a flower; if it falls on a jug, it takes the form of a jug; if it falls on a human being, it takes the form of a human being. Similarly, Śiva being of the form of love, whatever He touches becomes of the form of love. Since He resides within love, the very experience of love is really the love of Śiva. Śiva manifests Himself in the form of love by entering into the innermost being of the devotee and communing with him. We know that knowledge is of the form of God; whenever we know a thing, the knowledge of that object is not in our mind, but it is ray of God which touches our mind to make it conscious, to make it the knower. It is this quality which differentiates any living being, any soul, from an inert thing. The mind itself is not conscious, it is made conscious

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by the touch of God. As soon as that touch is withdrawn, the mind becomes as unconscious as it ever was. Modern psychologists, studying the mind, say that it is constituted million times more of unconsciousness than consciousness. What does unconsciousness mean? It is inert. Only that particular part of the mind which shines through the light of God, through the light of consciousness, becomes conscious. Similarly, whenever a person knows a thing, he can immediately feel that it is the touch of God which is making him know a thing, because it is He who is consciousness. Since He is of the form of love, the moment we feel love towards anyone or anything, we should know that it is the Lord who is touching us. It is true, however, that by knowing limited objects, we are not able to contact God directly. But we are being contacted by Him and by realising this fact, we move closer and closer to Him. It must be mentioned here that by loving limited objects we will not move closer to God, but by realising that the touch of love is His touch will transform us. We will no longer be conscious of the object of love, but of love itself which is God; it is He who is touching us.

Since God enters our mind in the form of love, the devotee feels that God has been trapped inside him, because the feeling of love is within. We come across many devotees who say that they have captured God. Or, they have made Him a prisoner in their heart, in their mind. There is a famous story of Sūrdasa. The Lord came to him and in a playful mood He went away. Whereupon Sūrdasa says, 'You have run away because I am blind, but can you run away from my heart? I have captured you there.' Because love has entered our being, our mind, we feel that we have captured God.

This love has the capacity to make our mind dissolve. The mind loses it egoness whenever love becomes completely unified with it. As long as the feeling is 'I love', the duality remains. But once the realisation dawns that 'I love Him who is of the very form of love', then the mind starts melting. The devotee says that everything we do should be done by melting in love: Praise Śiva melting in love. We all repeat the name of the Lord—we may do *japa* or we may recite the *Viṣṇusahasranāma* or *Śivasahasranāma*, whatever we do we are praising Him. At the end of the sacred mantras we are told that if we recite them, we will gain such and such thing. What is our experience? We recite them every day, but

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nothing happens. Why? The reason is that we do not recite them melting in love. Our mind is absolutely hard and frozen. It is not ready to melt and is afraid of losing its individuality. If we can praise Him melting in love, we can experience Him that very moment. We must seek the Primal Being melting in love.

If we want to know Him, we will follow the path of knowledge. But why is it that even when we study the *Upaniṣads*, repeat all the arguments, and teach others, we still do not feel it in our own heart. Why is it that it does not become a living thing for us? The answer is that we have not sought the Primal Being melting in love. We have not loved Him as the very core of our being. The moment we do this consciously, Śiva bestows the love of union, granting the gift of loving Him alone. This is what we mean by supreme love. As long as we love Him along with something else, He is not near us, but the moment we love Him and Him alone, we experience that union, a gift that He bestows on us. He is always ready to bestow that gift on us, but we must be able to receive it. The Lord takes infinite forms to attract us becaus our love for Him can never be even an infinitesimal part of the love that He has for us. Most of the time we feel that it is we who love God. Limited as we are, our love can only be limited. Whereas His love for us is infinite because He is infinite. That is why being the pure, the purest, He still comes down to us in our every day life, but we do not recognise Him.

There is an interesting story. There was once a small village where people were not at all interested in spirituality. One day a beautiful maiden came to the village to sell flowers. She would come to the village every day and the young men of that village were attracted to her. They all approached her and told her that they wanted to marry her. Upon hearing that she said that she could not marry all of them. They agreed with her. She asked them whether they knew about a particular *Upaniṣad*. But they informed her that they had not even heard of it. Whereupon she told them that who ever could memorise it would be the right man for her. They agreed and approached the village teacher and inquired about that particular text. It took them a few weeks to memorise it, but many of them were just not capable of

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memorising it and they gave up. Eventually about thirty men completed the task and approached the young maiden. She told them that it was wonderful that they had memorised it. But she could not marry all of them. So she added that who ever tried to understand the meaning of this particular work, she would marry him. The young men began to study Sanskrit which took them several months. Having mastered the *Upaniṣad*, five young men approached her and told her to test their knowledge. The young maiden told them that she did not doubt them but she could not marry as there were five of them. So she told them that who ever realised this particular teaching in the innermost of his being, she would marry him. Several months passed by and there was only one young man who had completely dedicated himself and had realised the truth. He told the young maiden that he had realised it. Hearing this, she invited him to her house in the evening to meet her parents. The young man went to her house and met her parents. The parents welcomed him and told him that they had been looking forward to this meeting. They told him that the young maiden was in her room and he could go and meet her in her room. The door of the room was open and the path led to a river. There were footprints. He followed her footprints and when he reached the river, he found that there were only two sandals—golden sandals—and nothing else. He was surprised. He looked back and found that the house was no longer there. Since he had already realised the truth, it immediately dawned on him that it was the Lord Himself who had taken the pain to guide him through this.

This story shows that the Lord is ever present, every ready to guide us. Even when there is absolutely no love towards Him, He approaches us and possesses every part of our mind, but we do not pay any attention. We are not ready to accept it. It must be remembered that it is love which mollifies, love which softens a person and melts the heart. No other passion can ever melt the heart or soften it as love can. When we love someone, we are ready to pass ourself into the person whom we love. Love, like a fluid, gently glides us. In Sanskrit, one of the terms for love is *sneha* which also means grease or oil. Just as an object glides smoothly when oiled, similarly love helps us to glide smoothly into divinity, without any trouble whatsoever. For this reason

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the scriptures lay down that the two fundamental things which guide a person to the highest vision are *yogā* and *bhakti*. *Yogā* is like the life force for the spiritual person and love is like the motion which glides it through. It is the combination of these two, therefore, it is said: *śraddhā*, *bhakti, dhyāna, yogādavehi*. The moment love for God becomes manifest, dispassion, i.e., *vairāgya* can be easily practised by that person. Most of the time we try to practise dispassion without having passion for God. There is a Sanskrit verse which says that passion for God and dispassion for the world are actually two sides of the same coin. Dispassion makes us forget ourself and the feeling of belonging to the Lord becomes most important. But this love can be attained only when it is communicated to us by those who have this love in them.

Teaching King Rahugana the *Bhāgavata* says[17] that this love cannot be attained by practising austerity—*Tapasānayāti*, we may observe all the fasts, we may perform what is known as *pañchāgnitapa* during the month of June with four fires burning around us and the fifth, the burning sun. We may practise all these great austerities but Rahugana *tat tapasānayāti*, that is, these austerities will not lead to this love. *Naceyanā*, that is, we may perform the greatest sacrifices—*aśvamedha*, *vājapeya somayāga*—but it will not awaken love in our heart. *Nirvapaṇād gṛhādvā*, we may leave our homes and live alone in the forests, but it will not lead to love. *Nachandasā*, we may study the *Vedās* and the scriptures and recite them but it will not lead to love. *Vināmahatpādarajōbhi*, that is, by coming in contact with only those people who have realised this love within themselves, we are able to realise it. We have seen in our daily lives that even if we have not perceived something directly, we are get attracted to it when we hear about it from someone else. Businessmen know the secret of this and that is why they spend large sums of money only on advertisements. A few seconds on television means thousand of rupees yet they spend it, why? Businessmen know that by hearing about a product people will be attracted to it, particularly if they know that the person advocating it is an authority on it. For example, a film actor is chosen to represent a product—a necktie or a suiting—which makes a person beautiful. Or a lady, say, an actress, may be selected for the advertisement of a lipstick

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or such other product. We may ask why does this happen. The answer is that businessmen are conscious of the fact that this particular person is regarded beautiful by one and all. Hence, she knows what she is talking about and when she says that a particular product is best for such and such result, we are attracted. In other words, we are attracted by hearing about something and even more attracted when we know that the person who is talking is an authority. Herein lies the secret of advertising.

The *Śivapurāṇā*[18] has discussed the impact on us when we see others worshipping. There is an interesting story in the *Purāṇās*. There was once a king who had gone hunting. In olden days hunting was a common sport. When the king reached the forest, the tribal people were summoned as they knew where the game could be found. A *Bhil* or tribesman was appointed to spot the lions. Every day the Bhil would observe the king worship a particular Śivaliṅga with flowers and water, in a very devoted way. While worshipping—because the king was a great devotee—his heart would melt and tears of love would flow out of his eyes and he would be absolutely lost to the world. As the king was camping there, he was staying in a tent. The Bhil would peep through the slit in the tent and was moved by what he saw and he wanted to have that love for that image. At the end of the month when the king was going back, he asked that Bhil—because he had worked very hard—to name anything he wanted. The Bhil asked the king whether he would give him whatever he asked for. The king told him that he would. Whereupon the Bhil asked him for the Śivaliṅga. The king wanted to know what he would do with it as it would be of no use to him. The king told him to ask for riches and diamonds. But the Bhil remained firm and only desired the Śivaliṅga. The king was in a dilemma as he could not part with his chosen idol, but he had another one similar to it which he gave to the Bhil and told him to worship it regularly and use sacred ash, that is, *chitā bhasma*, or the ash produced when a human being is burnt. The Bhil began to worship regularly. The love for the liṅga had awakened when he had seen the king in love, and therefore, he also felt that love. He continued to worship and twelve years passed by. His love had grown immensely and so had the love of his wife towards the deity. Once during the rainy season, it poured

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for several weeks continuously. The Bhil searched for the sacred ash, but he could not find it anywhere because of the rain. That day when he sat down to worship, he told his wife that he would fast unto death as he was unable to give to the Lord what he had been asked to give. Therefore, there was no point in keeping this body, which could not worship the body of the Lord. His wife told him to stop worrying and she offered to sit in the hut while he set fire to it so that he could get ashes for his worship. He asked her whether she would make such a great sacrifice. She told him that it was no sacrifice because to give something to another whom one loves supremely is a matter of joy to oneself and one does not feel that one is being deprived of something. Hence, she would not be deprived of the body by this act. The hut along with his wife was burnt and the Bhil collected the ashes and performed the worship. Every day after worship he would call his wife to bring the food to be offered to the Lord. As was his habit and without realising what he was doing, he called out to his wife and she came with the food. Then the truth immediately dawned on him and he wondered from where had she appeared since she had been burnt along with the hut. She told him that she had set the hut on fire and the next thing she knew was that he was calling her and the food was ready. Now, such intensity of love was born in them only because they had seen the king worshipping with such intense love. The important point is that they continued to worship the Lord for twelve years.

Often we are neither intense nor do we continue to worship for as long as is necessary. Intensity and duration both are important as, for example, when we want to cook rice. There is the famous story of Bīrbal, which most of us have heard. In an attempt to teach Akbar a lesson, Bīrbal tried to cook *khichri* rice, by putting rice in a bowl which was about 20 feet away from the fire. When Akbar asked him as to how it would be cooked from that distance, Bīrbal told him that if the fire was there long enough, the rice would be cooked. Akbar, however, informed him that the rice would not be cooked from that distance. The idea was to teach Akbar who had asked a brahmin to stand in Yamuna during the month of January. Akbar had told the brahmin that if he could do it, he would be suitably rewarded. He knew that nobody would be able to stand in the icy cold water in winter. The

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next morning when the brahmin came to Akbar after suffering that torture and asked for his reward, Akbar did not want to part with the money. Akbar asked the brahmin what was he looking at while standing in water. The brahmin told him that he was looking at a lamp in Akbar's room. Whereupon Akbar told him that he was getting fire or heat from there. Bīrbal was trying this experiment to teach Akbar a lesson. So when Akbar said that the rice could not be cooked from that distance, Bīrbal reasoned with him that if the brahmin could get heat from a far away lamp, the rice would also be cooked. Thus, no matter for how long the rice is placed near the fire, if the fire is not intense enough the rice will not be cooked. On the other hand, no matter how intense the fire is, if the rice is not put on the fire for a sufficient amount of time, say, for a few minutes, then the rice will not be cooked. Even if the rice is placed for a few seconds on a fire with temperatures high enough to melt iron, it will not be cooked. Hence, adequate duration and proper intensity is required. Similarly, we must have intensity of love. A minimum intensity is needed and then it must be practised for a certain duration, then only love will be awakened.

This is possible again due to His grace, that is why the *Purāṇā* says[19] that this one-pointed love is born only out of grace. We have to wait for His grace, and develop a sense of faith. When our faith reaches a particular intensity, only then will the grace of the Lord be able to enter our heart. Since our heart is such a stony substance, that no matter how much grace the Lord wants to bestow upon us, we are not able to receive it. And it is through faith that we are able to receive it. Slowly, as love enters our heart, it melts more and more and eventually it melts into the very essence of love. That is why it is said *Śraddhā-bhakti-dhyāna-yogādavehi*. Faith, love or devotion, we may say, eventually leads to concentration of the mind.

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LECTURE FOUR

We have been discussing definite ways which lead to the highest vision of the Lord. We have dealt with faith and love. The *Upaniṣad* goes on to describe in detail *dhyāna yogā* or the meditation aspect—*dhyāna yogādavehi*. There are three concepts of meditation, contemplation and concentration which are very similar to each other. We will deal with each one of them separately.

The word concentration basically means moving to the centre. Though it is now an archaic word, earlier it was used in music-concentre. That is, we start with different notes and then come back harmoniously to one central note. Concentre means coming back to the centre. Similarly, in concentration we have one thought in front of us, we may move away from that but eventually we come back to that central thought again and again. Here the important point is to bring back the mind to the centre. This is the first stage of meditation or *dhyāna*. Whatever thought we are thinking of, or the particular form of the Lord we are meditating upon, say, His different features, or if we are thinking of a concept, the different ways in which that particular concept can be viewed, but all the time we come back to the central theme.

From concentration we move on to meditation. The word meditation means that we ponder over a concept again and again, repeat that concept. In concentration, our thoughts do go out but we bring them back to the centre. Whereas in meditation, we do not allow our thoughts to go out at all, we ponder over that particular subject or idea that we are meditating upon. Here the emphasis is on the idea or the particular form that we are meditating upon. If we are meditating upon a form, in concentration, we may move

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through other spiritual practices. The man approached one teacher who told him to start studying a particular work—*Laghu-Kaumudī*. The man came from the village and was not an intellectual. Some time passed and he told his teacher that he could not study. The teacher told him that after he became a monk, everybody would respect him. People would come and ask questions and if he was unable to answer them, it would be dishonour to the order. The teacher emphasised that it was important to study otherwise there was no point in becoming a monk. Hearing this, the man approached another teacher and yet another teacher, but whoever he went to, they all emphasised *Laghu-Kaumudī*. He was not able to dive into it. At last he went to a teacher who inquired as to what he wanted. Before he could say anything he started crying. With great love and compassion, the teacher inquired as to what the matter was. The man told him that he wanted to become a monk and all the preceptors he had approached had asked him to study *Laghu-Kaumudī* which he was not capable of studying. The teacher felt compassion for the man and he told him that he could become a monk, provided he agreed not talk to any one until the teacher allowed him to do so. The man readily agreed to that. The teacher asked him to meditate within his body itself, as the abode of all that exists.[21] Our body is the small universe. If we meditate in it and dive deep within, we are able to experience all that is in the external world in our own self. Hence, he was asked to meditate within his body as if it was the abode of the whole universe. He was to think of his spinal cord as the *mahāmeru*; his *piṅgalā* and *iḍā* as the Ganga and the Yamunā; *suṣumnā* as Saraswatī; *prāṇa* and *apāna* as the moon and the sun; his mind as *hiraṇyagarbha*. He went deeper and deeper into meditation because he was practising absolute silence.

Silence is very important as it puts an end to any talk that we would have with another person. Unless we repond, the talks do not proceed. Certain experiments have been conducted in the United States, where people were asked to just observe silence for a week, two weeks and it was found that the mind was able to observe things which it was not able to observe previously. The penetrating power of the mind increases when we practise silence. This man continued to practise silence, meditating in this particular way. Twelve

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years passed and he realised the final truth, it was then that the teacher told him that he could talk to other people because had he talked earlier, as the other preceptors had told him, he would not have been able to answer the questions posed by people and that would have brought dishonour to the robes.

Through meditation, by diving deep, we are able to contact the reality which we are able to know through the scriptures indirectly. Through meditation we have the direct experience. The phrase used here is *dhyānayogā davehi*. *Yogā* refers to eight different steps which lead to this higher meditation. The word *yogā* has been particularly mentioned here because before entering meditation we must develop what are called *yama* and *niyama*. Ācārya Sureśwara says[22] that the things that have to be developed as a mental culture are called *yamas,*[23] *manaḥ prasadaḥ*—being calm under all circumstances, *santōṣaḥ*—being happy with whatever we have at any given moment, *maunam*—the tendency to keep silent most of the time, *indriyanigraha*—control over the senses. All these constitute the mental culture. They are the first step towards entering these higher states.

We can always practise meditation, but practising meditation does not necessarily bring us nearer God. The *Purāṇās* have discussed many great ṛṣis who dived deep into austerities and meditations, and developed immense powers, but they fell because they had not developed *yama*—the mental culture. Manu goes to the extent of saying that a person who does not follow *yama* falls, even if he practises *niyama* completely and thoroughly.[24] Sureśvarācārya says that that which is practised physically by the body is called *niyama.*[25] For example, *tapaḥ*—austerity—is a physical, bodily phenomenon which we have to practise, bearing all pain that afflicts the body without trying to remove it or fight it, prostrating before the Lord, circumambulating the Lord. All these things are done through the body. First, we must develop our mental culture, then *niyama*, austerity, etc. It is only then that we should try to enter the depth of meditation. Otherwise we will gain powers, no doubt, through meditation; but meditation will not lead us towards the Lord. The powers may eventually lead to our downfall.

The *Upaniṣad* goes on to describe what should not be con-

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sidered as means—faith, lóve, meditation and *yogā* are means to that knowledge,[26] but *nakarmaṇā*, i.e., action, and *prajayā*, i.e., progeny and wealth, are not the means to attain the beatific vision. These are the known means to attain anything in the universe. If we want to acquire any thing, we have to do something to acquire it or we may acquire it through wealth. Hence, these are the means to acquire worldly objects. But ignorance can never be dispelled through action. There is a reason behind it: all actions are due to false identification with the body and mind. Unless we identify ourself with the body, we cannot act. Unless we identify ourself with the mind, we cannot act. Hence, this false identification with the body and mind makes them appear to be conscious, because it is we who are actually conscious. False identification implies that it is born out of ignorance. That which is born out of ignorance cannot destroy ignorance. All actions ensue due to attachment to a result. We want to gain something therefore we act. Either we want to reach a place, or we want to change a thing for better or for worse, whatever we want to attain is apart from our own self. If destruction of ignorance was the result of something, then it can never be eternal because that which is produced can never be infinite. From the scriptural standpoint, all the scriptural actions have been ordained to attain certain results. Nowhere in the scriptures has any action been enunciated as dispelling ignorance or leading to knowledge. If the scriptures say that any action will lead to salvation, then since actions are of different types, salvation will also be of different degrees. Hence, a person performing a hundred *aśvamedhas* will achieve greater liberation than a person performing only two *aśvamedhas*. Actions vary. If liberation is attained, knowledge is acquired through action, then liberation cannot be of the same degree. It will be different.

Actions are always performed with the ego—'I am going to do such and such thing.' Therefore, when we perform action with the ego, how can it lead to egolessness. Of course, the question remains that some action or the other we will be continuously engaged in. How is it connected with knowledge or liberation? Actually, knowledge is expressed in the following terms: 'I am a non-doer, I am a non-actor. My body-mind complex is to be acted upon not by me but

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by God.' We have to become like a flute. The sound comes out of the flute and it seems as if the flute itself is producing the music, but it is the musician who produces the music by playing on it. Similarly, we have to make ourselves the best instrument for God to act through us. It is only then that we acquire the knowledge: 'I am the non-actor; it is He who is playing through my body-mind complex.'

As long as we have our own egos to work with, it is not possible to attain this egoless state. Thus, action or wealth or progeny which are considered to be the means to attain worldly things cannot be the means to attain liberation. On the contrary, the *Upaniṣad* says[27] that this is possible by getting rid of the idea: 'I am an actor, that it is I who enjoys things. Let God act through me, let God enjoy through me. I am only going to be an instrument.' In other words, by renouncing the idea of action, we are able to attain egolessness.[28] That supreme bliss is hidden in our own heart. It is in that experience the *paramahamsās*—the *yatis*—enter. Whoever has had this experience is really a *paramahamsā*. The *Upaniṣad* goes on to say[29] that those who have determined the real essence and purpose of the *Vedās* as God realisation—*Vedānta-vijñāna-suniścitārthāḥ*. The *Vedās* are not meant as a guide to attain worldly pleasures. It is true that the *Vedās* do tell us the means to attain worldly objects, wealth, son, or even a kingdom. However, the real purpose, the real meaning of the *Vedās*, is not that we should attain those things through the *Vedās*, but to know that everything can be attained through God. Whatever can be attained through any worldly means can be attained through God. Thereby, we are able to divert our attention wholly to God and not merely a part of it, as many people feel that worldly things have to be done in a worldly way and a part of our lives can be dedicated to God. The *Vedās* have described all the different *karmas*—*sakāma karmas*—so that we are able to realise that even if we get anything from the world, we could have got the same through God Himself and, therefore, we can meditate on Him with our wholehearted love and attention. This renunciation leads us to the realisation that we will not get anything from anyone apart from God.

There is a story about Upamanyu. He wanted milk so he

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asked his mother to give him milk. His mother was a poor Brahmin and she could not afford to give him milk. She asked him to meditate on Śiva who gives everyone everything. She, however, added that He would give everything only if Upamanyu did not depend on anything else. Upamanyu went away—his *āshrama* is near Kedar Nath—and dedicated himself totally to meditate on Śiva. Some time passed and Śiva came in the guise of Indra and offered to grant him any boon that he wanted. Upamanyu told him that he had recognised him and he would not ask for anything from him as he was Indra. He added that he would accept only that which is given by Śiva. Hearing this Śiva, in the guise of Indra, told him that Śiva himself did not have anything so how could He possibly give anything to someone else. He added that Śiva's body is smeared with ashes of the dead and since he has nothing to eat, he consumes poison. So how could He give anything. Upamanyu told him to stop as he was not willing to hear anything against Śiva, his chosen deity. It was Śiva Himself who had assumed the form of Indra as he assumes all other forms. He revealed his Śiva form to Upamanyu and asked him to name any boon. Upamanyu told the Lord that he did not desire anything as he was satisfied. Śiva told him that he had wanted milk so he gave Upamanyu the ocean of milk. This story illustrates the concept of complete dedication: we want nothing from any one else apart from the Lord. To bring out this idea clearly, the *Vedās* have laid down *saṅnyāsa yogā*—renouncing all other help, we are able to attain Him.[30] It is through this certitude and this process of *sādhanā* that the aspirant is able to reach that Brahman experience at the end when all the creation has dissolved. Having outlined the steps involved in the spiritual process, the *Kaivalya Upaniṣad* goes on to give a detailed description of meditation.[31]

Viviktadeśa—for doing anything seriously, a proper place is necessary. If we want to do business, we have to visit places like Bombay or Calcutta; even an ordinary businessman will make any amount of money there. If we have to deal with government permits and quotas we have to visit Delhi, because it is in Delhi where we can contact the various officers and get our permits and quotas. If we want to set up an industry, we have to find out where the

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infrastructure is available. It is very easy for a person to say that start an industry in a tribal area. But without the necessary infrastructure, it is not practicable for us to undertake any serious industrialisation there. So, we must find out where the necessary infrastructure is available. In the same way, if we want to practise meditation it must be done in *viviktadeśa*, i.e., in a pure place. Every place has its own vibrations and associations. Wherever a particular thing is continuously practised, it leaves certain vibrations there.

A monk once went for *cāturmāsya* to a particular place. In *cāturmāsya* monks stay only in one place for two months. Having reached the destination, he told his devotees that he could not stay in that house. It was a garden house. They inquired as to what the matter was. The monk told them that he did not get proper vibrations in that house and, therefore, he could not stay there for two months. The devotees then found another house for him and he went there. But some young people wanted to find out what the matter was. Eventually, they found out that the master of that particular garden house had lived with a woman without getting married to her. They also had children. Though this incident had taken place long ago, say, forty, fifty, or sixty years ago and people had completely forgotten about it; yet the vibrations remained. Wherever a vicious act is done, it leaves its own impressions. In the same way there are associations. If we go to a place of pilgrimage, like Varanasi, we have a certain association with that place. On the other hand, if we go to a slaughter house, completely different associations will arise in our mind. So when we want to practise meditation, the place must be pure, sacred and clean.

Details regarding this are given in the other *Upaniṣads*. This *Upaniṣad* only mentions *viviktadeśa*—a cave, the bank of a river, the top of a mountain, all these places help a person who wants to practise meditation. In the term *vivikta dēśē, ch* includes time. There are definite times when the atmosphere is surcharged with spiritual vibrations, for example, early morning. A person who gets up at 4 o'clock in the morning is not going to engage in any other worldly act. All such activity starts after eight o'clock. The atmosphere at that time is surcharged by people who are engaged in some

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kind of quiet activity. Even if they are not meditating, they may be studying, or they may even be going out for a walk. This is not the time when vicious acts are done. Some of us may have driven out of town. The best time is to leave at 4 o'clock in the morning because at that time all those alcoholic truck drivers go off to sleep. The whole night they will be driving but in the morning they go off to sleep. Atmospheric vibrations at dusk time are helpful. Similarly, certain days like *aṣṭamī, caturdaśī, amāvasyā, pūrṇīma* help a person who practises meditation. Our mind is also linked with the phases of the moon. That is why if a person goes mad, we call him a lunatic. Luna means moon. Something has gone wrong with his moon. *Cakāra*[32]—definite postures also aid in meditating on different forms of the Lord.[33] For instance, if we meditate on Brahmā, *hamsāsana* is helpful.[34] Whereas if we meditate on Viṣṇu, *nāgāsana* is useful.[35] *Siddhāsana* aids in meditating on Rudra. In other words, there are definite poses which help us to meditate on a particular form or even on a particular idea.[36] If we want to meditate conceptually, *nirālambana yogā*, meditate on the *nirālambana*, a particular *āsana* has been prescribed which assists in this.

Suci—purity of the body-mind complex is essential. This is attained after we have had our bowel movements, had a bath and purified our self. All these activities lead to a state where we become tensionless. These things have to be practised to know their results. Every thing cannot be known through logic; we have to be rational. Rationale means logic along with experience; both have to be combined. There are many things which a person practising meditation finds helpful.

Once I was suffering from some disease and a doctor, well known to me, examined me after some other doctors had seen me. Though I had been taking medicines for a long time yet there was no improvement. The doctor prescribed some drugs and I noticed that they were more or less the same combination, which the other doctors had prescribed earlier, only the trade mark was different. So, I told him that I had already tried these medicines. He laughed and said that it was not merely the medicine which helped. If I took the medicines he had prescribed, there would be an improvement. So, there is an individual connection with every spiritual practice. There are some people who are able to

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meditate only at midnight. They are not able to meditate in the morning. These individual differences have to be taken into account.

The body should be erect as far as possible.[37] During meditation—*atyāśramasthaḥ*—we must completely dissociate ourself from the body, because caste, *varṇā* or *aśrama* are in relation to the body. The *Sūta Samhita* says[38] that a person who knows that caste, station of life, etc., are associated merely with the body, and not with the self or with the mind, is able to completely dissociate himself from all bodily connections when he is meditating. We must try to see [39] the one who is beyond the three states of consciousness. While referring to the three states of consciousness, the *Upaniṣad* states that we are merely the witness of these three states of consciousness. It is by asserting this that we are able to perceive ourself in unitary consciousness with the Lord. As long as we do not transcend the consciousness of the body and its associated ideas, we are not able to dive deep. Having controlled the senses,[40] and with our heart full of love we must mentally prostrate before our own teacher. The teacher is the one who has imparted the knowledge to us. There is no doubt that the knowledge can be found in the scriptures; but words change in their connotational meanings, idioms differ. It is not easy to determine the real purpose of the scriptures.

After experiencing this truth in his own life, the guru or the teacher is able to give it to us directly. The guru himself has received it in an unbroken succession. Today we come across interesting statements. When people ask their guru as to who his guru was and how did he get the knowledge, the reply is: 'I have received it myself.' When people hear this they feel that if he could acquire knowledge on his own so can they. The unbroken chain of imparting knowledge is important. A ceremony called *gotrācara* is performed as part of the marriage rituals, in this seven generations of the two families are enumerated. If, for a marriage we want to know about seven generations of the two families, then we must also find out about seven generations of our guru. By thinking of him, we are actually thinking of the knowledge that we have received. Then we start meditating.[41] First, formless meditation is described, because this *Upaniṣad* follows that pattern. The *Upaniṣad* first describes the difficult

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aspect and then goes on to an easier concept. We meditate in the centre of our heart because that is the place where we feel anything. It is true that there are different centres in our spinal cord. From the base or *mūlādhāra* up to the head or *sahasrāra*, there are different centres and we can meditate on any one of them; but it is easy to meditate on the heart centre because we always think of the centre of the heart as our own self. While meditating on this centre, we should feel that it is *viraja*, i.e., bereft of all impurities. All impurities are in the body and the mind. Whereas when we turn within it is *viraja*, it is faultless. The important point to note is that it *is* faultless and not that it will *become* faultless. Meditation is never in relation to something in the future. It is that which exists at this moment. It is bereft of all sorrow because it is of the form of bliss. *Acintyam*—we cannot conceive of Him, He takes infinite forms. It is of the form of quietude and unmanifest. While talking of these concepts we have to use words because these concepts can be described only through words. So, when we meditate on a formless thing, words become important. We may select only one word or we may select several words. Initially, we can select a number of words and then slowly come back to only one word, as we go deeper and deeper in our meditation. We must think of it as the eternal witness, it is He who knows every thing. That is the form of meditation. Let the mind be seen, no matter what thoughts come to the mind we should not worry about them. But we should not identify ourself with that particular mental mode. For a person who is unable to do this, the *Upaniṣad* suggests that he choose a particular form.[42] He may take the help of *Om*. Umā is actually *Om* with a minor change of words, because Uma is U-ma-a. If we say U-ma, it becomes a-u-ma which is *Aum*. If we repeat Umā rapidly *Umā* Umā it becomes *Aum*. When we choose a particular form, we may think of the Lord with three eyes, the blue-throated form of Śiva.The important thing here is that we must identify with that particular form and know the importance of that form. What are the three eyes of the Lord? If we merely think of them as eyes, it will not help us. It is through knowledge, volition and action—*jñāna, icchā, kriyā*—that everything is attained. So, the Lord has three eyes which are always open. Similarly, we must try to harmonise our knowledge, our action and our volition.

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Again and again, the *Vedās* emphasise[43] that whenever we worship a deity, we must identify ourself with that deity. The Lord is *nīlakaṇṭham*—blue throated. Why is He blue throated? He drank the poison which was going to burn up the whole universe. Similarly, we must be ready to accept all the poison. Today things are different. No one is willing to take any blame upon himself. All the time we try to put the blame on someone else. The entire nation, the whole culture, is suffering because of that. We never stop and ask ourselves where have we gone wrong. We are a part of the nation. If something is wrong with the nation, it is we who have also committed some mistake. Instead of correcting ourselves, we are all the time trying to find fault with others. *Nīlakaṇṭham* is a person who is able to drink the poison, even though he is not responsible for it. The Lord did not take part in the churning of the nector but still He accepted it. A person who is able to do that, he alone is fit to meditate on the blue-throated Lord. In this way whatever the concept, whether we associate it with words, or whether we associate it with form, it is the association which should be prominent in the mind and that should enter our own life.

The *Upaniṣad* goes on to say that we may select a number of forms, any form that we like.[44] It is He alone who is Brahmā, Śiva, Indra, Aksara, Swarāt, Viṣṇu, the vital breath, which is meditated upon by *yogis*. It is immaterial which form we select, but once we have chosen one form we must stick to it and completely absorb the ideas relating to it and identify ourself with the Lord. Eventually, we have to think of the Lord not merely in that particular form but in all forms. The *Upaniṣad* says[45] that we have to see that it is He who has become everything. *Sa eva sarvaṁ yadbhūtam*—whatever has happened earlier is Him, whatever will happen in the future is also Him. He is the eternal one. In the beginning we choose a particular form, but eventually we have to transcend that form and see the Lord as the reality behind the whole universe.[46] *Sarvabhūtathamātmānam*—the Lord is present in all beings and all beings are inherently present in Him. It is expressed in both ways. Just as gold takes the form of different ornaments, so also the Lord takes the form of everything. Gold is the ornament and the ornament is gold because if we merely say that gold is the ornament, it seems as if gold is something apart from the

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ornament. This is a mistake we often make even in the case of Godhead. Each atom at each moment is nothing but God. It is not that we will perceive God or we will conceive God, whatever we may choose to call it. To begin with we may feel that we will realise Him in a particular way. However, when we realise we find that every atom at every moment is nothing but Him alone. To achieve this absolute identity, we do not have to search for God outside this universe. The whole universe including our own body-mind complex and the ego within is nothing but His manifestation. It is a mistake, an illusion, to think that our ego is distinct from the universal ego. Attaining this vision leads to the final beatitude. To attain this, the *Upaniṣad* mentions the *Oṁkāra*,[47] that is, continuously seeking refuge in *Aum* and meditating on the Lord in this way. The allegory is that our body is like the lower firewood and *Oṁkāra* is like the upper firewood, when we churn the two firewoods, fire manifests itself. Similarly, when we repeat that *Oṁkāra* in our body, present in our heart, then that knowledge springs forth. The process of meditation has been outlined in the *Upaniṣads*. This very form also takes the form of the cognising self, that is how we are able to know Him immediately. We will discuss this later.

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LECTURE FIVE

We have discussed faith, love and meditation. Now we will proceed to the most difficult part of this work. Though generally, I prefer not to end in the most difficult part, but as this particular *Upaniṣad* follows this process, we have to go through it. We will now discuss what is it that we realise. *Śraddhā, bhakti, dhyāna, yogā* are the means; but means to what? *Avehi* or realise God; have a direct experience. Thus, we have to discuss something which is not only a difficult concept, but also there are verbal difficulties when we deal with the English language. The concept of *ātman* is not present in any language, other than Sanskrit. Generally, when we translate it into English we use two words—consciousness or the self. Unfortunately, both these words refer to a limited conception. We are always conscious of something, and we are separate from what we are conscious of. Consciousness always implies a dichotomy between the subject, the experiencer, and the object or that which is being experienced. The same is true of the word self. The moment we say, 'I myself saw it', we really mean that nobody else, but 'me'. Whether we use the word self or we use the word consciousness, the idea of *ātman* cannot be conveyed. *Ātman* refers to the existence of consciousness. We have to use a word in which there is no dichotomy between the subject and the object. It is the experience itself, not experience of or experience by. The *Upaniṣad* describes the process of trying to understand it.[48]

In order to explain this consciousness, the analysis of 'I' becomes important. We find ourselves in three states of consciousness. We are awake, just as we are awake now, where we perceive objects through our senses and our mind. There

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is the 'I' associated with the body-mind complex and there is the external world of which we are conscious. But there is another world which we perceive—*swapna sajīvaḥ*—the dream world. In the dream world we perceive in the same way as we are perceiving now, but not through our senses, and without any external world. We project our own impressions and we are conscious of them. But we are not conscious of them as projections. Sometimes, we may even project during the waking state. But when we project during the waking state, for example, in a dimly lit room, we may see a rope as a snake. The snake is not there, it is a projection of our mind. The first step is to perceive something. We are not able to perceive that object as a rope, but our eyes have gone there and have observed something which is not clear and so the projection takes place. In the waking state also, when there is an illusory perception, the senses come into play. But in the dream state there are no senses; we do not perceive anything which is present; there is only a projection. We are conscious during the waking state and we are also conscious during the dream state. When we enter the state of deep sleep, i.e., dreamless sleep, we do not project anything; but our consciousness remains and that is the reason why upon waking up, we are able to say that we slept soundly, we did not know anything there. We did not know anything there, or there was nothing there we were conscious of.

When we analyse these three states of consciousness, we find the means by which we experience change. But 'I' myself—the conscious being—remains the same. That is why I am trying to connect all the three states. I am able to say that though now I am observing this world, in the state of deep sleep I did not observe anything, because there was nothing to observe. Now I can recall that it was I who did not know anything there. It was I who projected everything during the dream state, and it is I who is conscious of the fact that the projected world did not exist, that everything was hidden during the deep sleep state. So, the 'I' remains the same through these different states. The states come and go over the substratum, that is, the consciousness which is me. Things that come and go do not affect the substratum. When I am in a state of deep sleep, nothing exists; but when I am in the waking state,

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everything is manifested, differentiated. The *Upaniṣad* says[49] that it is from that state of undifferentiated self that everything comes out, whether it is the vital energy, the mind, or the senses. During that state everything was there unmanifest, and when I am in the waking state, everything is manifested out of that particular state of undifferentiation. When we analyse ourselves in this way, we realise that there is a consciousness bereft of all adjuncts like the senses, the mind and ignorance. The consciousness remains unchanged. When we further analyse we realise that as far as our experience goes, it is true that there is one consciousness. But the question arises: Is there different consciousness in different souls, in different body-mind complexes? If we were to remove these three adjuncts, the three states of consciousness, then there is no way we can say that there is anything which differentiates one consciousness from the other. We are conscious of ourselves as 'I'. That is why the word 'I' has no real plural. When we say he and they, by 'they' we mean he + he + he + he. When we say thou and you, we mean thou + thou + thou + thou. But when we say I and we, it does not mean I + I + I + I. This is the reason why consciousness, without referring to these three states, can be only unitary.

The *Upaniṣad* says[50] that Śiva, the soul of all souls, the foundation of the world, is consciousness. He is the greatest, yet the subtlest. This is something akin to sky or space. Space is all-pervasive. Therefore, it has the highest measure, yet space is the subtlest, because we cannot perceive it through our senses. Similarly, this consciousness is prevalent everywhere, because unless there is a conscious being to know anything, we cannot say that something exists. Consciousness as a substratum is present in every part of the universal being and yet if we want to know it as consciousness, as an object, we can never know it. We can only know it as our own self: 'I am conscious'. This is the only way we can know consciousness. This consciousness lights up all these different states.[51]

Once we are able to experience this consciousness which lights up not only our waking state but the waking state of all beings, lights up the dreamless sleep not only in us but in all beings, then we know that the universal consciousness present in all beings is manifesting itself through different

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body-mind complexes. This can be understood with the example of electricity. Electricity is manifested in a small bulb, say, a 25 watts bulb and a 1,000 watts bulb. Electricity in these two bulbs is not different. Its manifestation varies because of differences in the bulbs. Similarly, it is the unitary consciousness which is expressing itself through all the body-mind complexes. However, we do see differences. One person is a great intellectual, another person is not able to understand even the most ordinary things of life. One person is able to love the whole humanity whereas another person cannot love even his own wife. All these differences are not because of consciousness, that is, differences in consciousness, but are due to the fact that that particular body-mind complex is limited. It is the same consciousness which is playing everywhere and it is through that consciousness that 'I' become conscious. When we take refuge in that, then we are continuously conscious of our self as ego consciousness. But once we are able to contact that foundation which makes us conscious, then we become conscious of the fact that God has endowed us with the greatest gift He could have given. In the beginning we feel that the ego is an obstruction. But if we look at inert matter, unconscious matter, it can never know anything. It is because He has endowed us with this ego that we are able to observe anything, we are able to feel anything. This ego is not a burden on us, it is Śiva's gift to us, His greatest gift. We have misused it by forgetting that this is His gift, and by assuming that the ego is conscious by its own power. That is the mistake we make. The moment we realise that it is the consciousness which is playing through this ego, then we know that it is His greatest gift to us.[52]

Then we are able to see *tridhāna* in all the three states of consciousness; in all the forms, it is He, the consciousness, which is being manifested. In us He is manifesting His ego as the *bhokta,* the enjoyer. Again, it is that same consciousness which is expressing itself as *bhogya,* the object of enjoyment, because even the object of enjoyment is a projection on our mind by the cosmic mind. Often we feel that there are objects which we are able to pursue. But have we ever stopped and analysed how can an object be observed by consciousness. What is the relationship between the two? There cannot be any exchange between the conscious and

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the unconscious, unless there is a bridge in between. That is why some schools of thought, the materialist schools of thought, and even modern scientists to a great extent, adopt the attitude that consciousness is only a result of a physical phenomenon. They try to reduce consciousness in physical terms. For instance, I see a man. What happens? Certain light rays travel and fall on the retina which is a physical phenomenon. Then certain electric conductions take place in the brain which is also physical. The question remains: electric conduction has taken place, but how is it being observed? What is it that is observing it? We can reproduce all the phenomena of looking at a picture or at a man through a camera but it will not know. What is it that makes it conscious? How is it connected? The attempt is to reduce consciousness to unconsciousness: something happens in the brain. The Upanisadic seers were not satisfied with this explanation. According to them, the consciousness of that man is being produced in me by another consciousness, i.e., the universal consciousness. To put it in simple language, God is projecting on my mind the image of a man because God is omnipresent, He is able to project that image on all the people for any length of time. When I see an object, the object is nothing but the projection of God on my ego consciousness. So it is He who has taken the form of that object or subject. He, again, has endowed me with the ego as the subject—*bhokta bhōgyanch yadbhavet*. When I perceive this, I find that it is the same consciousness which is playing subjectively and objectively. That is the *cinmātrō haṁ sadāsivaḥ*, the reality behind my being is the *Sadā-Śiva*. He is known through all these adjuncts, but without these adjuncts, He can never be known. The eternal knower knows without any instrument, but we know Him only through these instruments. Hence it is He who takes all the forms.

There is an interesting story. During a war a particular fort was surrounded by the enemy on all sides. As the gates of the fort were locked, the enemy could not enter it. But the enemy had guns and other ammunition and soon everyone in that fort was killed. There was an outer army which the enemy did not know about. Only one person was present as he had not been killed. He would put gun powder in guns placed at different positions within the fort. Sometimes he would fire the gun from one side, sometimes

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from the other side, leading the enemy to believe that there was an entire army within the fort. In the meantime, the enemy forces came to know that the army of the king, who owned the fort, was on its way from another fort. After hearing this news, the enemy forces wanted to find somehow or other a solution to the problem, as war was going on. They sent an emissary with the message that they were ready to compromise. The man inside the fort sent a reply that if they were allowed to go out with all their arms and ammunition they would give up the fort. The enemy agreed to this. The man walked out and he was alone. The enemy inquired about the army. Whereupon the man told them that he was the army. He was firing the different guns from different points.

We are more or less in a similar position. I am using the eyes, ears, hands, feet, etc., but the one who is utilising them is only one. There are not several individuals in me. Similarly, there are not several individuals in this universe. It is that one consciousness which is utilising all the different bodies and minds. It is He who becomes the *draṣṭā, śrotā, mantā vijñātā*.

Āśvalāyana reflected and practised this again and again until the truth dawned upon him. The *Upaniṣads* do not tell us that the results will follow only after our death. That is one of the greatest contributions of the *Upaniṣads*. They say that the experience that we are talking about can be had here and now. Āśvalāyana practised it, experienced it and he tells us about his experience:[53] 'I am that non-dual absolute, who existed before creation as an unmanifested phenomenon. From that state of consciousness all have come into being, remain as long as they are associated with that consciousness and eventually dissolve into that consciousness.'[54] 'I am the subtlest and yet omnipresent. All this variety of the universe has come out of that consciousness, which is universal. He is the oldest and yet He is the youngest.' In this way Āśvalāyana communicated whatever he had experienced. Let us try to understand this in another way. A person is wearing trousers, a shirt, a waistcoat, a coat, and a neck-tie. He is wearing all these clothes. All these clothes appear absolutely different to us, but if we were to ask a tailor, he would immediately say that these

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clothes have been made from a particular cloth. The tailor does not have to destroy the different forms in which the cloth has been cut. The trousers remain trousers; the coat remains a coat; and yet the tailor knows that these have been made from one single cloth. Similarly, we do not have to dissolve anything; it is not that the world will not exist. It is only that we will be able to perceive the basic unity which is present, in spite of the fact that all this variety is being observed, because we know that everything exists, everything is known. If we say that a thing is different from that what exists, then it is not there. Everything is an extension, is a manifestation of existence. If we say that a thing can never be known by anyone, then we may as well as say that it does not exist, it is not there. Everything that exists must be associated with knowledge, with consciousness. That is what is known as metaphysical cancellation in Vedanta. We do not cancel out things, we only metaphysically cancel it.

Ācārya Śaṅkarā has pointed out that if by reaching the goal, the world ceases to exist, it would have ceased to exist long ago when Śuka and Vāmdeva realised God and we would not have found the world. So the world continues to exist as it is, but we are able to perceive the truth of this world. We will continue to play with all the senses, even after this realisation. Āśvalāyana says,[55] 'It is not the hand that grasps. I am able to grasp without the hand, I grasp the thing with my hand no doubt, but now I have grasped this hand. Only by this hand, by utilising it, I have grasped the object.' The object is being grasped by the hand. But how is this hand being grasped? We see with our eyes; but with what do we see the eye itself, because we know that we are seeing with our eyes.We do not look at our eyes with the eyes. So the eye perceives, but we are able to perceive, the consciousness is able to perceive, without the help of the eye. A word is heard by the ears, but how are we able to hear the fact that the ears have heard a word? There is no other ear there to hear it. That is why Āśvalāyana says *acintya śaktiḥ*. This consciousness has infinite powers. It is able to do everything without the help of any instrument, because even when it is utilising the instrument or seems to utilise the instrument, the utilisation of that instrument is only through its *acintya śaktiḥ* i.e., infinite power.That is why this

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consciousness is beyond all adjuncts. Adjuncts belong to consciousness, but consciousness is the controller, and not the adjuncts. That is why we get into difficulty. The ego is a particular instrument through which consciousness is able to observe a thing in a specific form. Let us consider an example to understand this clearly. We look at a pencil with our naked eyes, but with our naked eyes we cannot perceive the pores which are in the wood of which the pencil is made. If we see the pencil under a microscope all the holes in that wood become visible. But then we are not able to see the whole pencil. In other words, if we want to see a minute part of the pencil, we cease to see the whole pencil, and if we want to see the whole pencil, we cannot look at it minutely. With a microscope we are able to observe the minutest part of the pencil, but the not the whole pencil. Similarly, when consciousness wants to see a thing specifically, it has to work through the ego, but through the ego we can never perceive the whole universe. The same consciousness with its own *māyāśakti*, with its own power, is able to see everything in the world. At the same time with the help of different egos, it is able to observe the minute parts. Both cannot be done by the same adjunct. Āśvalāyana says[56] that all the *Vedāntas*, all the *Vedās* are pointing to this particular knowledge and general knowledge simultaneously, because it is by pointing out both that one is able to see that both the cosmic adjunct and the individual adjunct are only adjuncts. Once this knowledge is attained, all dualities cease to exist.

Talking of his own experience, Āśvalāyana says,[57] 'Virtue and vice, *puṇya* and *pāpa*, cannot touch me. They can touch only the adjuncts, but once I know that I am beyond these adjuncts, neither a thing can be called virtuous nor vicious. This is an important point to note, because the question often arises that God makes us do everything, but does He make us commit crimes as well. Those who do not ponder metaphysically would probably say that all bad acts are done by the individual while all good acts are being done by God. That is a metaphysical impossibility. If the ego can do a wrong act it can also do a right act. Hence, we have to take a definite stand: either it is the ego which is the actor, or it is the consciousness which is the actor. That consciousness is present everywhere, but because we identify ourselves with the body-mind complex, we feel that we have

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committed a crime or we have done a virtuous act. But when we realise that it is the consciousness which is playing in us, we know that we have neither done a good thing nor have we done a bad thing. It is only through the body-mind complex that the consciousness has acted; depending upon the frame of mind, it has acted in a particular way. Let us consider the illustration of electricity again. In western countries when people are put to death by the government or by the jury, they are electrocuted. Is electricity responsible for their electrocution? There is no doubt that electrocution has been possible through electricity, but electricity is not responsible. The same is true here. It is the consciousness which has acted through the body-mind complex. But it is the body-mind complex which is instrumental and not the consciousness. If body-mind is corrected, the wrong action will not take place. So *puṇya* and *pāpa*—virtue and vice—are not connected with us as consciousness. They are connected only with the body-mind complex. The change that we seek is in this complex and not in the consciousness. That is why consciousness is neither born nor does it die, nor is connected with the body, the senses or even with the external objects, the earth, fire, water and all other elements. Consciousness is not affected by any of these.

When Āśvalāyana narrated his experience, Brahmāprajāpati agreed that he had attained the highest knowledge. The guru is not only necessary to teach us the method, to show us the goal, but he is also necessary to tell us whether we have reached the final destination. That is why throughout the ages this knowledge has been passed down from generation to generation. The tradition is not merely in an individual. Throughout the ages there have been great sages who have recorded their experiences and it is by referring to all those experiences that we are able to verify whether our knowledge is right or wrong. It is true that by reading them we do not attain knowledge, but we do become aware of the fact whether our knowledge is correct or false. For example, if a person does not see red colour as red; he is colour blind. The very fact that his experience differs from the experience of all others indicates that there is something wrong with his eyes. He cannot say that since he has perceived red as only a shade of black, his experience is true knowledge. Similarly, the highest experience has to be

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verified by all those who have practised those spiritual disciplines. If a person says, 'Only I see it, I perceive it like this, no one else need perceive it like this', then we have to say that his knowledge is incorrect. That is why the tradition maintained is able to give us the final authority to say whether we have attained that state or not.

The *Upaniṣad* goes on to say,[58] 'Whoever attains this as the centre of his consciousness, in the centre of his heart, who is able to perceive it directly that he is partless, he is whole, he is non-dual, he is the witness of all the egos, beyond being and non-being, he has attained the final realisation.' Having described this highest realisation, the *Upaniṣad* prescribes a simple path for those who are not able to reach these heights.[59] They must first get rid of all sinful activities. Some of the sinful activities have been described here. These encompass all the impurities of the mind which may be present, all the sinful acts. In our tradition, drinking of liquor, stealing of gold and killing of a brahmin are considered to be among the grave sins. These have been enumerated here. By implication all of them have to be taken. How do we get rid of them—*yaḥ śatrudrīyamadhīti.* Sins can be removed by contemplating again and again on the all-pervasive nature of the Lord. There are sixty-six *mantras* in this particular passage called *śatrudrīya* where the Lord is described as all. This beautiful passage clearly enunciates that *vañcate*—a person who steals; and *parivañcate*—a person who commits dacoity; are also due to that energy only. By continuously repeating this thoughtfully, perceiving everything as a manifestation of God, all the sinful tendencies of the mind can be slowly overcome.

The mind commits a sin under the false knowledge that it is able to do something. The moment it realises that no matter how sinful an act we may commit, we will not gain what we want to gain, it will withdraw from that sinful act. As I told you earlier, there are good propagandists, what businessmen today call PROs for sins, but not for virtuous acts. Every one believes that one cannot win a case in a court without speaking a lie. True enough, but the question is has the other party adhered to the truth? Both parties have lied, but only one party has won. The lawyers have even better PROs. They say that it is by speaking a lie that they have

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won. They will never say that by telling a lie they have also lost the case. But continuously emphasising that things can be attained by wrong means, sinful acts are made to appear profitable.

Long ago in 1941-42 and even prior to that there was no such thing as 'black market'. Later rationing was introduced and medicines were controlled. If a person needed a medicine, he went to the shop and the shopkeeper would ask him to come late in the night when it was dark. Hesitatingly, he would give the medicines, all the time afraid that somebody would see. Slowly, we have reached a stage where right in the middle of say, Chandini Chowk, a person in broad daylight and in front of every one will say that if one wants a thing in black, one can get it. Contraband goods are sold openly. Why? The reason is that it is continuously emphasised that this is the only way we can conduct business. The question remains: have we gained anything by it? Only the figures have changed. When one person commits a sin, say, black marketing, he gains something or seems to gain it. But what happens is that what he has earned as black money from one source, he has to pay that money as black money to another source. For instance, a person earns money by selling silver wares in the black market and then he buys land. Whatever black money he has earned he has to give to the dealer for the land. Has he gained anything? Sin never brings us any benefit. We make a mistake when we think that it will be able to give us something.

Avimukta means a realised teacher. That is why the *Upaniṣad* goes on to say[60] that by taking refuge in a teacher who is absolutely liberated the knowledge will dawn. *Avimukta kṣetra* also means Banaras. The eye-brows are also called *avimukta kṣetra* and by continuously meditating at this particular point, according to one's capacity, the light of consciousness will dawn. Or, we can go to a holy place where everybody is engaged in holy acts so that we get those vibrations, or we can live with a preceptor who will continuously guide us towards this goal. By following any of these methods, *atyāśramī*, we are able to go beyond our body-mind complex and attain this knowledge which will liberate us and we will realise that it is the unitary consciousness which alone exists and is prevalent everywhere.

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We have discussed the *Kaivalya Upaniṣad'* in these five lectures. We began with a discussion of the pre-requisites. Control of the senses, control of the body, etc., are absolutely necessary if we want to go beyond this world, which is differentiated, to the world of unitary consciousness, where there is absolutely no differentiation. If we want to undertake this journey and move from this painful existence to that blissful state, the first pre-requisite is that we control our senses and body. We also discussed the concept of faith. Without faith no movement can take place because *śraddhā* is what leads to *pravṛtti*, that is, what makes us do things. In the absence of faith, we cannot give ourselves wholeheartedly to anything. From faith we moved on to love, that is, devotion to God, because unless we have love for Him, we will never be able to contact Him as He cannot be contacted by any other means. We also discussed the process of meditation and, finally, the object of meditation, the result that has to follow. By following this path, we will enter that blissful state where variety will no longer be distractive but Śiva will be manifested in everything. This knowledge, as I pointed out, is being given to us continuously.

In this particular age—the *Kaliyuga*—we are intellectually aware all the time. Modern man is more intellectual than anything else. The *Upaniṣads* give us the bare data of experience, that is the foundation. It was built up by Ācārya Śaṅkarā 1200 years ago in a logical, rational way. That is why his disciple Padmapāda refers to him as *anumārdhavigraham*. *Anumā* means inference—logical inference. Identified with his work Ācārya Śaṅkarā can be seen as having two equal parts which are complementary to each other, *ardhavigraham*, one half is the experience, the other half is the logical representation. That has been his greatest contribution. Twelve hundred years have passed since he gave us this knowledge. Singlehandedly, he transformed the whole society. He had absolute faith that truth will always triumph. We find the Upanisadic saying *Satyameva jayate* written in all places. Though it may be not desirable to say this, but the fact is that from the highest officer to the lowest chowkidar, everyone is absolutely convinced that it is the untruth which ultimately triumphs.

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Ācārya Śaṅkarā made no compromises. He had absolute faith and his love of God was immense. There is not a single place of pilgrimage where he did not go and sing hymns in praise of the Lord. He was full of love for God and had gone deep in his meditations. When he was staying at Śriśaila near Nagarjuna Sagar, today there is a dam at this site, he said,[61] 'When will my meditation be so deep?' He goes on to say 'staying here in a cave, I will be so absorbed that the vines will go round my body, thinking that it is inert and small insects will build nests in my ears, thinking that this is only a place—an inert place.' That was the depth of his meditation. As far as knowledge is concerned, he has handed down to us the commentaries on the *Upaniṣads*, the *Gītā*, the *Brahma Sūtra*, etc., by which we are able to logically know things. In conclusion, it may be said that it is the realisation of our self as consciousness which is the final aim of our having taken birth in a human body. No matter how much we are able to do anything externally, unless we are able to make that contact with Śiva, with the supreme consciousness, everything remains superficial. Unless we are able to contact Him, it is of no value what we do in the external world.

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APPENDICES
NOTES

1. अधिकारी च विषयः सम्बन्धश्च प्रयोजनम्।
शास्त्रारम्भफलं प्राहुरनुबन्धचतुष्टयम्॥ —सर्ववेदान्तसारसंग्रह।

2. अधीहि भगवन् ब्रह्मविद्यां वरिष्ठां सदा सद्भिः सेव्यमानां निगूढाम्।
यथाऽचिरात् सर्वपापं व्यपोह्य परात्परं पुरुषं याति विद्वान्॥ —कैवल्योपनिषद् १.१.

3. ब्रह्मविद्यां सदा सद्भिः सेव्यमानां निगूढाम्। —कैवल्योपनिषद् १.१.

4. अहङ्कारविमूढात्मा कर्ताहमिति मन्यते। —गीता ३.२७.

5. तस्मै स होवाच पितामहश्च श्रद्धाभक्तिध्यानयोगादवेहि। कै॰ उ॰ १.२.

6. ज्ञेयं यत्तत्प्रवक्ष्यामि यज्ज्ञात्वाऽमृतमश्नुते। गीता १३.१२.

7. अनादिमत्परं ब्रह्म न सत्तन्नासदुच्यते। गीता १३.१२.

8. श्रद्धाविहीनस्य तु न प्रवृत्तिः प्रवृत्तिशून्यस्य न साध्यसिद्धिः।

9. अश्रद्धयैवाभिहताश्च सर्वे मज्जन्ति संसारमहासमुद्रे।

10. श्रद्धां प्रातर्हवामहे श्रद्धां मध्यंदिनं परि।
श्रद्धां सूर्यस्य निम्रुचि श्रद्धे श्रद्धापयेह नः॥ ऋग्वेद १०.१५१.५.

11. लघुशङ्का न कर्तव्या प्रातःसायं जनार्दन।

12. श्रद्धभक्तिध्यानयोगादवेहि। कै॰ उ॰ १.२.

13. सा त्वस्मिन् परमप्रेमरूपा। नारदभक्तिसूत्र

14. सा परानुरक्तिरीश्वरे। शाण्डिल्यभक्तिसूत्र

15. आत्मनस्तु कामाय सर्वं प्रियं भवति। बृहदारण्यकोपनिषद् २.४.५.

16. सदेव सोम्येदमग्र आसीदेकमेवाद्वितीयम्। छान्दोग्योपनिषद् ६.२.१.

17. रहोगणैतत् तपसा न याति न चेज्यया निर्वपणाद् गृहाद् वा। श्रीमद्भागवत

18. पूजा जपेशगुणरूपविलासनाम्नां युक्तिप्रियेण मनसा परिशोधनं यत्। शिवपुराण

19. भवप्रसादादमले परस्मिन् परमेश्वरे।
अस्माकं जायते भक्तिस्त्वय्येवाव्यभिचारिणी॥

20. युक्ताहारविहारस्य।..... गीता ६.१७.
नात्यश्नतस्तु योगोऽस्ति न चैकान्तमनश्नतः॥ गीता ६.१६.

21. व्याप्तिः व्यष्टिशरीरेऽस्मिन् मनसो व्यष्टिरूपिणः।
तस्मात् सर्वात्मकमिदं स्वशरीरं विचिन्तयेत्॥ मानसोल्लास

22. मनःसाध्या यमाः स्मृताः। मानसोल्लास

23. मनःप्रसादः सन्तोषो मौनमिन्द्रियनिग्रहः। मानसोल्लास

24. कायिका नियमाः स्मृताः। मानसोल्लास

25. तपोदानं तितिक्षा च नमस्कारः प्रदक्षिणम्।

26. न कर्मणा न प्रजया धनेन त्यागेनैके अमृतत्वमानशुः। कै॰ उ॰ १.३.

27. त्यागेनैके अमृतत्वमानशुः।

28. परेण नाकं निहितं गुहायां विभ्राजते यद् यतयो विशन्ति। कै॰ उ॰ १.३.

29. वेदान्तविज्ञानसुनिश्चितार्थाः संन्यासयोगाद्यतयः शुद्धसत्त्वाः। कै॰उ॰ १.४.

30. ते ब्रह्मलोकेषु परान्तकाले परामृताः परिमुच्यन्ति सर्वे। कै॰उ॰ १.४.

31. विविक्तदेशे च सुखासनस्थः शुचिः समग्रीवशिरःशरीरः।
अत्याश्रमस्थः सकलेन्द्रियाणि निरुध्य भक्त्या स्वगुरुं प्रणम्य॥ कै॰उ॰ १.५.

32. विविक्तदेशे च सुखासनस्थः .....

33. हंसाख्यं ब्राह्ममासनम्। मानसोल्लास

34. नागाख्यं वैष्णवासनम्। तत्रैव

35. सिद्धाख्यं रौद्रमासनम्। तत्रैव

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36. निरालम्बनयोगस्य निरालम्बनमासनम्। तत्रैव

37. समग्रीवशिरःशरीरः। कैवल्योपनिषद् १.५.

38. योऽवस्थात्रयनिर्मुक्तमवस्थात्रयसाक्षिणम्।
महादेवं विजानाति सोऽतिवर्णाश्रमी भवेत्। सूतसंहिता

39. अवस्थात्रयनिर्मुक्तमवस्थात्रयसाक्षिणम्।

40. भक्तय स्वगुरुं प्रणम्य। कैवल्योपनिषद् १.५.

41. हृत्पुण्डरीकं विरजं विशुद्धं विचिन्त्य मध्ये विशदं विशोकम्।
अचिन्त्यमव्यक्तमनन्तरूपं शिवं प्रशान्तममृतं ब्रह्मयोनिम्॥
तमादिमध्यान्तविहीनमेकं विभुं चिदानन्दमरूपमद्भुतम्। कै॰उ॰ १.६-७.

42. उमासहायं परमेश्वरं प्रभुं त्रिलोचनं नीलकण्ठं प्रशान्तम्।
ध्यात्वा मुनिर्गच्छति भूतयोनिं समस्तसाक्षिं तमसः परस्तात्। कै॰उ॰ १.७.

43. देवो भूत्वा देवं यजेत्।

44. स ब्रह्मा स शिवः सेन्द्रः सोऽक्षरः परमः स्वराट्।
स एव विष्णुः स प्राणः स कालोऽग्निः स चन्द्रमाः॥ कै॰उ॰ १.८.

45. स एव सर्वं यद्भूतं यच्च भव्यं सनातनम्।
ज्ञात्वा तं मृत्युमत्येति नान्यः पन्था विमुक्तये॥कै॰उ॰ १.९.

46. सर्वभूतस्थमात्मानं सर्वभूतानि चात्मनि।
संपश्यन् ब्रह्म परमं याति नान्येन हेतुना॥ कै॰उ॰ १.१०.

47. आत्मानमरणिं कृत्वा प्रणवं चोत्तरारणिम्।
ज्ञाननिर्मथनाभ्यासात् पापं दहति पण्डितः॥कै॰उ॰ १.११.

48. स एव मायापरिमोहितात्मा शरीरमास्थाय करोति सर्वम्।
स्त्रियन्नपानादिविचित्रभोगैः स एव जाग्रत्परितृप्तिमेति॥कै॰उ॰ १.१२.
स्वप्ने स जीवः सुखदुःखभोक्ता स्वमायया कल्पितजीवलोके।
सुषुप्तिकाले सकले विलीने तमोऽभिभूतः सुखरूपमेति॥कै॰ उ॰ १.१३.

49. एतस्माज्जायते प्राणः मनः सर्वेन्द्रियाणि च।
खं वायुर्ज्योतिरापः पृथिवी विश्वस्य धारिणी॥कै॰ उ॰ १.१५.

50. यत्परं ब्रह्म सर्वात्मा विश्वस्यायतनं महत्।
सूक्ष्मात् सूक्ष्मतरं नित्यं तत् त्वमेव त्वमेव तत्।। कै॰ उ॰ १.१६.

51. जाग्रत्स्वप्नसुषुप्त्यादिप्रपञ्चं यत् प्रकाशते।
तद् ब्रह्माहमिति ज्ञात्वा सर्वबन्धैः प्रमुच्यते॥कै॰ उ॰ १.१७.

52. त्रिषु धामसु यद् भोग्यं भोक्ता भोगश्च यद् भवेत्।
तेभ्यो विलक्षणः साक्षी चिन्मात्रोऽहं सदाशिवः॥कै॰ उ॰ १.१८.

53. मय्येव सकलं जातं मयि सर्वं प्रतिष्ठितम्।
मयि सर्वं लयं याति तद्ब्रह्माद्वयमस्म्यहम्॥ कै॰उ॰ १.१९.

54. अणोरणीयानहमेव तद्वन्महानहं विश्वमिदं विचित्रम्।
पुरातनोऽहं पुरुषोऽहमीशो हिरण्मयोऽहं शिवरूपमस्मि॥ कै॰ उ॰ १.२०.

55. अपाणिपादोऽहमचिन्त्यशक्तिः पश्याम्यचक्षुः स शृणोम्यकर्णः।
अहं विजानामि विविक्तरूपो न चास्ति वेत्ता मम चित्सदाहम्॥ कै॰ उ॰ १.२१.

56. वेदैरनेकैरहमेव वेद्यो वेदान्तकृद् वेदविदेव चाहम्। कै॰उ॰ १.२२.

57. न पुण्यपाये मम नास्ति नाशो न जन्म देहेन्द्रियबुद्धिरस्ति।
न भूमिरापो न च वह्निरस्ति न चानिलो मेऽस्ति न चाम्बरं च॥ कै॰ उ॰ १.२२-२३.

58. एवं विदित्वा परमात्मरूपं गुहाशयं निष्कलमद्वितीयम्। कै॰ उ॰ १.२३
समस्तसाक्षिं सदसद्विहीनं प्रयाति शुद्धं परमात्मरूपम्। कै॰ उ॰ २.२४

59. यः शतरुद्रीयमधीते सोऽग्निपूतो भवति स वायुपूतो भवति स आत्मपूतो
भवति स सुरापानात् पूतो भवति स ब्रह्महत्यात्पूतो भवति स सुवर्णस्तेयात् पूतो भवति स कृत्याकृत्यात् पूतो भवति
— कै॰उ॰ २.२४.

60. तस्मादविमुक्तमाश्रितो भवति अत्याश्रमी सर्वदा सकृद्वा जपेत्।
अनेन ज्ञानमाप्नोति संसारार्णवनाशनम्।
तस्मादेवं विदित्वैनं कैवल्यं फलमश्नुत इति।। कै॰ उ॰ २.२४.

61. सिद्धिं तथाविधमनोविलयां समाधौ
श्रीशैलशृङ्गकुहरेषु कदोपलप्ये।
गात्रं यदा मम लताः परिवेष्टयन्ति
कर्णे यदा विरचयन्ति खगाश्च नीडम्।। योगतारावली

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प्रकाशिताः ग्रन्थाः

१. वैदिकसम्प्रदायान्तर्गता औपनिषद दश शान्ति (संस्कृत/हिन्दी)
२. मानसोल्लास-माधुरी (संस्कृत/हिन्दी)
३. साधनसंग्राम-१ (हिन्दी)
४. साधनसंग्राम-२ (हिन्दी)
५. श्वेताश्वतरोपनिषद् (संस्कृत/हिन्दी)
६. ईशावास्योपनिषद् (संस्कृत/हिन्दी)
७. कठोपनिषद्-१ (संस्कृत/हिन्दी)
८. स्तुतिकदम्बः (संस्कृत)
९. मानवता की ओर (हिन्दी)
१०. व्यक्तित्व का विकास (हिन्दी)
११. गीता प्रवेश-१ (हिन्दी)
१२. रुद्राध्याय (संस्कृत/हिन्दी)
१३. उपदेशसाहस्री (संस्कृत)
१४. सिद्धान्तबिन्दुः (संस्कृत)
१५. शतश्लोकी (संस्कृत)
१६. पञ्चीकरणम् (संस्कृत)
१७. प्रकरणाष्टकम् (संस्कृत)
१८. प्रकरणद्वादशी (संस्कृत)
१९. उपनिषद्भाष्यम्-१ (संस्कृत)
२०. बृहदारण्यकोपनिष्त्सम्बन्धभाष्यवार्तिकम् (संस्कृत)
२१. बृहदारण्यकोपनिषद्भाष्यवार्तिकम्-१ (संस्कृत)
२२. उपनिषद्भाष्यम्-२ (संस्कृत)
२३. Our Dharma (English)
२४. Jivana Yajna (English)
२५. Vedanta Through Shri Shankar's Prakarans (English)
२६. Chhandogya : An Introduction to Bhashya (English)
२७. Vedanta Philosophy for 21st Century (English)
२८. Vedanta and the Art of Living (English)
२९. Vedanta and Integration (English)

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Sri Dakshinamurti Sanskrit Mahavidyalaya
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